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JOHN M. MEAD.

# MEMOIR

OF

# JOHN MOONEY MEAD,

WHO DIED AT

EAST HARTFORD, CONN. APRIL 8, 1831,

AGED

4 YEARS, 11 MONTHS, AND 4 DAYS.

"Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of God."—LUKE, 18: 16.

PUBLISHED BY THE

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# PREFACE.

The following Memoir, with the exception of a few paragraphs, was written by Rev. Asa Mead, who survived his beloved child but a few months, at the request of a number of persons deeply interested in the religious education of the young. Some of these persons were intimately acquainted with the subject of the memoir, and others had heard much of him, and received a favorable impression in regard to his character. The memoir, when prepared, was also examined by several judicious persons; ministers of the Gospel and others, all of whom united in the request that it might be published.

As those who first proposed this publication agreed in the opinion that a knowledge of the manner in which this child was treated, together with the results, would be profitable to both parents and children, and a benefit to the cause of education, to communicate this knowledge has been an object constantly in view. He is not therefore presented to

the reader *merely* as a pious child. The character of his intellect, as well as of his heart, is described, and not only the kind of knowledge communicated, but the manner of communicating it, is shown. No doubt the sanctification of the child should be the first and principal object of the parent's solicitude; but this is to be attained by the truth, and a knowledge of the truth is essential to its effect. The intellect of the child therefore must be cultivated, in order to reach the heart. Should God grant his blessing in his usual manner, it will be found that the benefit will be proportioned to the clearness of the child's understanding of religious truth, and the happy associations connected with it. The manner then of communicating truth and the objects associated with it, are important matters for the consideration of those who have charge of the young.

With such views, this memoir has been prepared for the benefit of parents and teachers, as well as of children and pupils. How profitable to either it will be, future events must determine. Had the parents of this child expected to be called so early to part with their son, they would have kept in writing an account of what might be profitably made known; and no doubt a larger and more valuable narrative might have been the result. But being obliged to

depend on memory, and unwilling to add another to the already too numerous fictitious narratives before the public, they have given *only what is distinctly recollected*, and commit the work, imperfect as it is, to the blessing of God, hoping it may not be altogether useless.

It is possible that some things are not stated *precisely* as they occurred, but no intentional exaggeration is admitted; and it is believed that the character of this child is not presented in a more favorable light than truth warrants.

Should the prevalent impression, that it is impossible for a young child to give evidence of piety, be removed from the mind of any, and parents and teachers be encouraged to labor more for the early conversion of those committed to them, expecting success, then those who mourn the early exit of this lovely boy will rejoice that he has not lived or died in vain.

# MEMOIR.

## CHAPTER I.

*Early history, and traits of character.*

John Mooney Mead, the subject of this memoir, was born at Brunswick, in the state of Maine, May 4th, 1826. His father was then pastor of the Congregational church in that town. Being their first born, his parents made him, from his birth, the subject of earnest prayer, with strong confidence in God that he would sanctify him for himself. Their chief desire was that he might be early converted, and wholly employed in the love and service of God; and especially that, should it please him, he might in due time become a preacher of the Gospel. But their prayers were generally petitions for his early conversion to Christ, and his sanctification.

In giving him a name, they wished to prepare to exert a happy influence, by keeping before his mind a happy example. They therefore selected that of a man who had been an early and most valued friend of his father, well known in New-Hampshire as a

friend to the fatherless and widow; who then was on the borders of eternity, trusting he was about to enter the rest that remaineth for the people of God.

They felt strongly the necessity of being prepared to discharge the duties of parents, in training up an immortal being; and sought preparation by reading some of the best books on early education, by frequent conversations with each other, and by prayer for wisdom from above, often pleading the promise, "If any lack wisdom, let him ask of God, who giveth to all men liberally, and upbraideth not, and it shall be given him."

A very considerable part of the value of the memoir of such a child must consist in the addition it shall make to the stock of information on early education. The reader, whether a parent, child, or teacher, will therefore have patience to read a somewhat particular and minute account of the measures adopted with this child, and their results. It is hoped it may not be time spent in vain.

The first understanding of his parents with each other was, that every thing in regard to the management of their child should be matter of consultation and prayer; that they would always act in concert, so as not to thwart each other; and that they would pursue a uniform system, always keeping his good in view.

They regarded him from the first as an *immortal* being, who would for ever feel the consequences of

what they should do in relation to him. In their conversations, it was early and often remarked, that he was acquiring knowledge, and forming habits for eternity. Nothing, therefore, that affected him, could be indifferent. Even what seemed to many but trifles, might be of immense importance to him.

On this account they commenced, when he was only a few months old, withholding from him whatever he cried for; and when he was fretful, they did not pacify him by caresses, or by bestowing what he desired, but by directing his attention to something else. It was a common saying with them, that parents often hire their children to cry and be fretful. They give whatever the child demands in this way, and thus obtain present relief from his importunity, but teach him how to obtain, hereafter, whatever he may desire; thus subjecting themselves to all his caprices, whenever he chooses to make himself and them unhappy by his fretfulness. Perhaps in no way are more children injured than in this. It teaches them to be selfish, and regardless of the feelings of others. It habituates them to obtain what they desire, in the most disagreeable way; and for these habits they must be often chastised, and meet with many mortifications while young, to subdue their disposition, or they are rendered disagreeable and miserable for life. A little resolution, early practiced and persevered in, might have prevented these evils, and even saved the parents much

trouble, as well as the child much sorrow. At least, so the parents of this child believed, and they have seen no cause to think that they were mistaken.

The next result of regarding him as an immortal being was, that his parents began at a very early period to give him all the knowledge they could, especially religious knowledge, believing it *would abide with him* eternally. They often remarked, that they could not make their son rich, but they could give him that which would be a blessing to him when all riches should vanish away. They trusted him very little to the care of others; and as soon as he could understand sufficiently, he was often placed in his little chair by the side of his mother, or on his father's knee, to hear stories repeated in the simplest language, or little hymns rehearsed, and then explained, when he seemed not to understand them.

Before he could talk plainly, he knew several of these hymns for children, and seemed to understand them. This was the case also with several texts of Scripture, often repeated to him; and he knew that Jesus loves to have little children pray to him, because, when on earth, he took them up in his arms, and put his hands on them, and blessed them, and said, "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven."

The thought, "he is immortal," led his parents to consider it of great importance to cherish his bene-

volent affections. This they did by endeavoring always to exhibit these affections themselves in his presence, avoiding, as much as possible, even an unpleasant look or tone of voice; treating him, and teaching him to treat others, with constant kindness, and guarding against all unnecessary occasions of irritation. They found him soon imitating their very looks and tones, and were convinced, that even these have more influence in forming the early character of children, than all the good precepts and counsels that can be given them, when not enforced by the example of the parents themselves. Every child has an eye quick to discern, and imitates actions long before he understands rules, and forms habits of conduct before he can perceive the advantage of obeying laws.

Another thing agreed upon by his parents was, that they would treat their son as a *rational* being. They believed that a child can be reasoned with, and made to understand why he should do what he is required, or refrain from what he is forbidden to do, and this as soon as he understands the meaning of the words used. How early he will understand language, depends on words being always used in a proper manner in his hearing. They never therefore talked to their son in the affected babyish manner common with some parents and others, who, when talking to a child, use language without meaning, or mispronounce words, as if the child could

better understand mere nonsense than correct expressions. All the words used when speaking to him had as uniform a meaning as when speaking to adults. The most perceptible effect of this was, that from the first, his pronunciation was uncommonly distinct, and his language very correct, a circumstance observed with surprise by many, till they learned the reason.

Very early his parents began to tell him why they required him to do what he was bidden, and he rarely hesitated a moment, whenever he understood the reason. Care was required, however, to prevent his demanding a reason, when prompt obedience was necessary. Once when about three years old, he asked his mother her reasons for doing something. She considered it trifling, and not worth a reason, and answered, "Because I choose, my son." He looked quite dissatisfied, and replied, "That is no reason at all." But generally this was easy done, by using at such times a tone of more decision and authority; a practice, the meaning of which even a child will soon understand.

He was early taught to *subject his own will to that of his parents.* This they endeavored to procure, as far as possible, by gentle means; but if these failed, they applied the rod of chastisement. His father well recollects the first and only severe contest to subdue his will. It was when he was about fourteen months old. There is no need to give particu-

lars. Suffice it to say, he understood what was required of him, and refused to obey. Chastisement was inflicted with a *very light* rod, and at short intervals, till he obeyed. Then he immediately asked to be taken up, put his arms around his father's neck, put his little face up to his in the most affectionate manner, and seemed after this to love his father more than ever.

The sight or mention of a rod was all, for months, that was necessary to produce instantaneous obedience. It was found, however, that obedience was generally readiest, and most cheerful, when the commands were given in the mildest and most affectionate manner, seeming rather to ask than to demand compliance. By pursuing this course, his parents endeavored to connect obedience with pleasure, and resorted to severer methods only when milder means had failed. If in any instance they departed from this method, they soon saw reason to regret it, for he would adopt their tone and manner in making his own requests, and never seem to think it improper. This will probably be observed in nearly every child, and shows the importance of care in every thing regarding them.

From the first it was understood that John's parents *did not allow any one to deceive him* on any account. No false pretences were allowed, no promises made to him without the intention of fulfilling them, and no threats which it was not intended to

execute, if necessary. He always therefore expected just what had been promised, and on the very conditions, and at the time specified. If from forgetfulness this was not done, he would remind the person of it, and perhaps say he told a falsehood. If his parents had failed, they did not hesitate to confess the fault, and tell him that they were sorry, and that they must ask God to forgive them, and do so no more. Sometimes he thought they failed because he did not understand them; and then they explained their meaning, and showed him they had not failed. Thus they endeavored, by example, to inculcate a sacred regard to truth; and in vain will parents hope to do it in any other way. The child will do as he knows they do, and how can they correct him for it?

*No one was allowed to frighten* John with threats or tales of spirits, or imaginary dangers, nor give him a dread of being alone or in the dark; and till he learned it from other children, he never appeared to dread darkness more than light, nor to know fear, where there was not real danger. He was accustomed, from less than a year old, to be put to bed at sunset, and never caused trouble during the night, on any account. When his usual time came he expected to retire, and made no resistance or complaint.

Before he was two years old, it was manifest he had a most ardent thirst for knowledge—a strong desire to be acquainted with every thing around him. This his parents determined to gratify, and therefore

explained whatever he wished to understand, and answered his numerous questions, as far as they could, and never discouraged his asking as many as he pleased. He was not put off with a frown, or reproved for his curiosity; but they answered him pleasantly, when they could, and when they could not, they told him so.

In the exercise of this curiosity, he learned, with very little encouragement, nearly all the letters of the alphabet, before he was two years old, by picking them out on a stove in the sitting room, and asking their names. Those not on the stove he learned with very little pains, so as to name them all readily, before he was two years old. This same curiosity was still indulged, and grew in strength daily. He would employ his father or mother an hour at a time answering his questions, and never seem wearied while they could attend to him. These questions were rarely trifling, and generally manifested much thought, and some understanding of the subject. If an answer was not understood by him, that must be explained till he understood the whole, or thought he did, and then he appeared satisfied, and seldom asked the same question again. This trait of character is no doubt common, in a greater or less degree, to all children, and needs but to be encouraged to secure a rapid advance in knowledge, and eminent attainments, at least by many.

The parents of this child never adopted the prac-

tice of *hiring* him to do what they wished, by giving toys or luxuries. When he had been obedient, or had performed *very well* what he was directed, or had done a praiseworthy act without bidding, they often gave him a ride, or a present of something useful; or, what he loved quite as well, told or read him a story from the Bible, or some other book, and informed him, it was told him because he had done well. At other times his reward was, being permitted to carry relief to those in want, or to help his father do something useful, in which he greatly delighted.

As before remarked, his parents always considered his religious instruction of the first importance, and made it the prominent object never to be neglected. It was the custom, from about a year old, for one of them to pray with him when he went to bed at night, as well as at other times; and he was taught, as soon as he could speak, to repeat the Lord's prayer, and a short simple petition for a holy heart, and for blessings on his parents and other relations. They endeavored to convince him that this was of no use, unless he prayed in his heart; and they explained and illustrated what it is to pray in the heart, so that he could understand it. Their instructions respecting prayer were often repeated, and much pains were taken to show its importance, and to make it a pleasant employment thus to address God.

He was always taught to consider *the Bible* the

best of all books, a holy book, God's own book; and the most interesting parts of its history were frequently repeated to him in simple language, and he was told these were in the Bible, and he must learn to read them himself. Of these he was never tired, but would sit and listen to his mother, as long as she was able to go on; and when she was fatigued, he would ask for another story.

Before he was two years old, his father purchased him a hieroglyphic Bible, to which he at once became attached, and by often asking questions respecting the meaning of its various emblems and pictures, he became familiar with most of the passages of Scripture found in it, even before he could read. His attachment to this book never appeared to diminish, till he began to read in the Bible itself, and then he almost at once laid it aside. No doubt it greatly assisted him in understanding the Bible. He would often say, when he read one of these passages, "This is in my hieroglyphic Bible."

From two years old to three, his progress in learning to read was slow. His mother could give but little attention, at that time, to his instruction;* and his parents did not deem it expedient to urge him forward faster than he chose, lest his health might

* It should be recollected that he was at this time *very young*. It is hoped that no parent will consider this a warrant for allowing older children to be idle, merely because they seem unwilling to learn.

be injured, or he become disgusted with reading. When he desired it, or was ready cheerfully to receive it, if his mother had leisure, he was instructed, and the object was kept before him, by telling him how he could thus learn to read stories for himself. During this time his mind was active and inquisitive. His desire to know about every thing he saw grew stronger, and his numerous questions were answered, and objects worthy of his notice frequently pointed out to him. Before he was three years old, it was often observed that he spoke with remarkable distinctness, and used language and expressed ideas common to children twice as old as himself, rather than of those of his own age. Even at this age he preferred the company and conversation of men and women, to that of children, and would often leave his play, to sit and listen, and ask them questions. Never was there any difficulty in keeping him still, if he could be acquiring knowledge.

From two years old he constantly attended *public worship* on the Sabbath, if the weather permitted. He would generally, for the two first years, fall asleep in the course of the sermon, but gave little trouble. If he became uneasy and restless, or inclined to play, whisper to him, "God sees you, John," and he would immediately become still and attentive. It was not expected that he would understand what he heard at this early age, but his parents wished to give the habit of attending the worship of God all

the strength of early associations. They have never doubted the advantage of it, for his desire to enjoy this privilege increased to the last, so that nothing but sickness could induce him to stay from it, when permitted to go.

This attachment to public worship was particularly strong the last few months of his life. In the coldest and most stormy Sabbaths of the winter, he insisted on attending, saying, he could go as well as his father—men went, and he must go. He often desired to attend the weekly female prayer-meeting with his mother; and when there, was uniformly serious, attentive, and much interested.

His father and mother often told him that *God saw him*, and noticed all he did and said, and even the feelings and thoughts he had; and that he noticed them especially in time of worship. They told him that God requires us to worship him in spirit and truth, not merely with words and actions; and if the heart is not engaged, all the forms of worship are useless and hypocritical. The result of these instructions appeared in great seriousness of deportment in time of worship, as well as in a strong attachment to it in all its customary seasons. Even in his diversions, rarely was he known to trifle with the forms or customary language of devotion.

Sometimes, if he had been disobedient towards the close of the day, his parents refused to hear him pray, or to pray with him, when he went to bed.

Nothing grieved him like this. He would beg of them to pray for him, say he was sorry he had been naughty; and if they refused, would weep and sob till he fell asleep, apparently destitute of comfort. Sometimes he would be heard praying God to forgive him for being so naughty, and make him a good boy, and bless his father and mother, and other friends.

A little incident, before he was three years old, will show something of his character then. His father was one day absent from dinner, and no gentleman was present. When his mother, with some others, came to the table, he, without any thing being said, went to his father's place, stood up in the chair, and asked a blessing with strict propriety. When dinner was over, he gave thanks in like manner. This service he ever after claimed the *right* of performing when no gentleman was present; and it is not known that he ever failed when at liberty to perform it. His language on such occasions was mostly texts of Scripture aptly applied to the occasion; more particularly was this the case the last year, and persons present have often remarked the force and propriety with which such a child could use the language of the Bible. His friends can give no other reason for his commencing this exercise, than that he had always seen it performed by men, and as no one was present, he considered it as devolving on him. He seldom attempted to imitate females,

but seemed to think that whatever his father or other men did, he must do.

Soon after this his father was sick on a Sabbath, and unable to preach or attend meeting. Just before the time of going, John came to his mother and said, "Mother, father is sick, must I preach to the people to-day?" She asked, "What my son would you say to them?" He replied, "I will tell them that 'Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.'" The passage of Scripture containing this he had probably heard read in family worship, or repeated in his mother's familiar conversation with him on the way of salvation. When he went that day to the meeting house, he passed by the pew where he usually sat, and went to the pulpit stairs with an intention to go up, probably expecting to preach.

Incidents like the above frequently occurred, and caused him to be regarded as an uncommon child, wherever he was known; and a professional gentleman in his native town, probably expressed the general opinion, by saying that "John had an old head." He will be remembered with lively interest for a long time in that place.

When John was about three years old, his parents removed from Brunswick, and resided in Gorham, in the same state, about a year. For some months they were unable to give much personal attention to his instruction. He was sent to school ten weeks, which was all the time of his attendance, except

what he devoted to the Sabbath School. Although he received much attention from the teacher, and was very happy with the children, he made no progress in learning to read. Whether schools conducted on the common plan are ever of advantage to children so young, is at least doubtful. Experience in regard to this child would go to establish the opinion, that half an hour a day, devoted by the mother to her child, is worth more than all the instruction he can have at school. Of course this remark does not apply to infant schools.

When John was about three years and a half old he began again to show a desire to learn to read, especially that he might read those stories which had been repeated to him from the Bible.

His father was that year from home most of the time, and the encouragement offered to him was, that if when he should be four years old he could read a chapter, his father would bring him a Testament and would be much pleased with him. This was all the stimulus he needed, and he applied himself so much to learning, that in two months he could read short verses, and in four he read a chapter with considerable ease, and was very fond of doing it daily.

From that time he generally read to his mother twice a day, either from a school-book for children, or from the Bible, which was his favorite book. As soon as he read fluently, the time devoted to it began to be one of vigorous mental effort for both mother

and son: for he refused to pass over a verse, or even a word that he did not understand, till he had sought an explanation. His questions were very numerous, and indicated much thought and intelligence. "What is the meaning of that word?" "What did he say so for?" "What did he mean?" "Who did he say this to?" "What did they do it for?" Questions like these, suggested by what he read, were almost incessant; and if the explanation was not intelligible, that must be explained till he thought he understood it.

Would parents encourage their children in asking questions, and gratify them with kind intelligible answers, we have reason to believe their taste for acquiring knowledge would be greatly strengthened, and many a young Franklin, or Doddridge, or Carey, or Henry Martyn, would be seen early investigating the works of nature, and the intricacies of language, and the meaning of the word of God. And in what can a mother especially be more profitably or more pleasantly employed, than in feeding the immortal mind of her child with knowledge, and above all, with that truth which is designed to sanctify the soul? The parents of this child now look back to no moments with such unmixed pleasure, as to those spent in encouraging and aiding him in obtaining a knowledge of truth. Their only regret is, that they did not give more attention to it. But, alas! how many parents devolve this, as a disagreeable

task, entirely on paid instructors; and never know, from month to month, whether their children are making progress or not, or whether they are directed right or wrong. Do they know any thing of the intensity of a parent's love? Do they know the value of the treasure committed to them in their children's minds?

Would children, too, who are able to read, but modestly and respectfully ask of their parents and others an *explanation* of what they do not know, they would find many not only ready to assist them, but many that would love them and respect them much more for their rational curiosity; and they would be abundantly rewarded by a great increase of knowledge, and of happiness; and would be prepared for greater respectability, usefulness, and happiness in life, and, with the blessing of divine grace, for a future world.

It required much patience and steady kindness to attend to John's lessons, and explain all that he asked, and not to check his curiosity, or disgust him with the exercise. Often an hour was spent in going over ten or fifteen verses. He would frequently say: "Tell me all you *know* about it;" and if his parents told him they did not *know* any thing about it, he would say, "Well, tell me what you *think*," or, "what you *suppose*."

It is not designed to intimate that none of these questions were inappropriate, or that all were dic-

tated by a desire to learn the sense of what he read; but the most of them were quite appropriate, and manifested a strong desire for information of every kind.

This same thirst for knowledge was constantly manifest, and he rarely heard a conversation on a subject mentioned about which he had not some questions to propose, either at the time, or afterwards. His eagerness was sometimes so great as to cause him to be troublesome, by interrupting conversation; inquiring what was meant, or mentioning something which the conversation had suggested, and asking information respecting it. He would desist at once, when told it was wrong; but as soon as an opportunity offered, he would generally pursue the subject.

When he was a little more than four years old, his father returned from an absence of several months, and brought him not only the Testament promised, but also, "Frank," in "Early Lessons," and some others of Miss Edgeworth's Works. His joy was very great. He immediately began to read in Frank one lesson a day. This opened a new field to his view, and gave new energy to his thirst for knowledge. On the journey to East Hartford, when his parents removed there, he observed every thing that passed, and kept them busy explaining what he saw.

He now wished to see and learn every thing, as Frank had done; and in a few months, by frequent importunity, he had induced his father to take him

to the cabinet-maker's, wheelwright's, shoemaker's, blacksmith's, and hatter's shops, and to the grist-mill, and the paper-mill. While there, he was constantly attentive to what was before him. He would look steadily for some time, and then question after question would follow, till he was satisfied. It was worth observing, that his questions generally related to the plainest and simplest processes. In regard to complicated machinery, or more difficult operations, he did not seem to understand enough to ask a question, and was satisfied with a very general description. How fully he understood what was explained to him, can only be known by his giving, sometimes, afterwards, an intelligible account, and perhaps asking questions about it which had not at first been thought of.

This habit of seeking an explanation of whatever he saw that interested him, he maintained every where. He once went into a neighbor's garden to see some grape-vine slips set out. He asked the boy a great many questions about his work, till the boy probably became tired, and to one of his questions, "Why he dug so large a hole to put his slips in," answered, "for *fun*." John looked at him, and said, "My father says, any body that does any thing for *fun*, has lost his reason." Many things here named may be seen in other children, and they are mentioned merely to remind others of the importance of keeping alive this desire for knowledge, and of di-

recting it to profitable subjects, rather than to let it grow wild, and die for want of proper sustenance; and leave the young mind dull and indifferent to knowledge, or to spend itself upon unprofitable subjects. No doubt the mind, as well as the body of the young, requires frequent but not long continued exercise, and may be trained to almost any habits of application. The mind of this child was often led, or rather directed, but never forced into any channel. The acquisition of knowledge was to him a constant source of pleasure, and he seldom needed urging on that account. Till he became fatigued, he would go on of his own accord, and then his parents considered it injurious to press him.

One instance of his seeking information abroad may be mentioned, not as being very uncommon, but as showing his constant habit. At his solicitation, his father, a few weeks before his last sickness, took him to Hartford. Having some business at a little distance, he left him for a short time with the owner of a store. This gentleman's kindness soon won his confidence, and when his father returned, he found his son questioning the gentleman about how the weight, that was hung to the door, shut it. This gentleman has repeatedly since mentioned his surprise at the discernment and the powers of so young a child.

The *correctness of his language* has been mentioned. It is impossible to do full justice to his un-

derstanding in this respect, without protracting this memoir too much. One little anecdote, when he was between three and four years old, will show his discrimination. He had expected a ride in a wagon, but just as he was about to get in, it was thought prudent to ride a little way without him. The result was, the horse was frightened, and threw the person in the wagon out, and broke it to pieces. In speaking of it afterwards, it was said, "S—— broke the wagon." He instantly replied, "No, he did not; the old horse broke the wagon." A few months before his death, when studying the fifth chapter of John's Gospel, he came to his father, and pointing to the 20th verse, read: "Marvel not at this, for the hour is coming, in *the* which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice." "Father," said he, "what is that *the* there for?" He was told it was the custom to write so, when the Bible was translated. He observed: "I shall not use it, when I recite."

His father sometimes employed a leisure moment when his son sat on his knee, in exercises of grammar, giving him wrong numbers, persons, genders, and cases to correct, interspersing among them correct expressions. It was rare that he failed immediately to correct the wrong, or to retain the right. This he did solely by recollecting how he had heard language used, for he had never looked into a book on grammar. He had commenced the study of arithmetic, and for a time made good progress; but

for a few months before his death he appeared to have lost his interest in it, and the book was laid aside. When about four he showed a great desire to learn Latin. After a few trials he gave it up, saying he did not understand it, but when he should be older he would learn that and Greek too.

About this time he began to attend a Sabbath School. At first he recited a hymn as his lesson, but soon began to commit to memory two verses in the New Testament each morning. These were generally selected so as to include in the lesson for the week some interesting parable or narrative. In this way, before he began to commit the Gospel in course, he recited many parts of Scripture, of which he was fond to the last.

About four months before his death his father took the entire charge of this part of his instruction. He had gradually increased his daily lesson from two verses to four or five, and in a few weeks he went to seven or eight verses daily. These he would often commit to memory in twenty minutes or half an hour. At other times it took him longer, according as he felt, or as the verses were long or short, plain, or difficult to be understood.

He had committed in course nearly all the first fourteen chapters of John. The last verse he recited was the 28th of that chapter: "Ye have heard how I said unto you, I go away and come again unto you. If ye lôved me ye would rejoice, because I said

I go unto the Father, for the Father is greater than I." It was the day he was taken with his last sickness; and before he had finished, a gentleman came into his father's study, and he went down and finished reciting it to his mother.

In his daily exercise he gave great evidence of understanding the meaning of words. He would often, in reciting, give the meaning of a whole verse in different words from those in the text, and more frequently he used single words synonymous with those read. This was always permitted the first time of reciting, but after that he was requested to recite the very words of the writer. Strangers have often remarked that his language was that of a boy ten or twelve years old; and few of even that age give such constant attention to the propriety and meaning of what they say.

It may be desirable to give some account of the habitual *disposition* of this child, as it was remarked that particular attention was given by his parents to its formation, even from a very early period.

Some persons may suppose, from what has been or will hereafter be said, that he must have been very still, sedate, and averse to play; but the very reverse was the case. Few children are uniformly so lively, active, and happy. He loved play, and was always active, when not seeking information. But never did he seem to take such delight in any sport as when he could induce his father to spend a few

minutes in diverting him. Then he seemed perfectly happy, and his voice would be heard in laughter over the house. With children of his own age he generally took the lead, and would find them ample employment, but never wished to engage in the rough sports of older boys. He always preferred exercise that could be useful to some body, to mere sport.

It was from the first extremely rare to see his anger excited; and when it was moved, a few minutes were sufficient to produce an entire calm. He never retained anger, or indulged in revenge, or seemed to remember an injury. The sun never went down on his wrath. If denied any thing on which he had set his heart, he seemed to feel keenly for a moment, but then returned to his former cheerfulness, as if nothing had happened; and it was often remarked, that he accommodated himself to peculiar circumstances with remarkable ease.

His affection for those to whom he became attached, was strong and durable. His love of his parents and sisters seemed to know no bounds. He did not part with either of them for an hour without manifesting it; and when he met them again, it was with uniform pleasure. About the time they were expected to return, he would watch continually, and run with eagerness to meet and kiss them. His parents were always his chosen friends and confidants; and the expectation of pleasing them and making

them happy, was the strongest inducement that could be used with him. When his father was absent, every letter his mother wrote he wished to dictate some message of love, and to make some mark that his father might see. At such times the greatest reward he could receive when he had conducted well, was for his mother to write how he had conducted; and nothing did he dread so much as that she should inform his father when he had done wrong, and thus make him unhappy. Once, when asked by his mother what she should write his father about him, he looked up, and with a most happy expression replied: "Tell him all the goodness, but don't tell him the *badness*." If he had offended or grieved his parents, he seemed very unhappy till he could become reconciled, and see them smile, when he manifested great joy. If either of them was unwell, he would sit beside them and wish to know if he could do any thing for them, and if permitted would run eagerly to do it. His affection for his sisters, as well as his parents, was manifested in a thousand indescribable ways every day, and seemed to run into and influence all his conduct. One very rainy morning it was told his mother that John and his sister had gone into the orchard. She went to call them, and saw John leading his sister slowly towards the house. He had taken his cap from his own head, and put it on hers, and his apron he had put round her neck. He seemed very happy, and not in the least to mind the rain,

which was falling on his own uncovered head. His parents and friends were much pleased to see him so careful and attentive to his sister, and so unlike some little boys, who love to tyranize over those who are younger and weaker than themselves. For the whole winter, he brought his sister in his arms, nearly every morning, from the bed to the fire, in another room, saying she must not get her feet cold on the floor, and this while his own were equally exposed. If he did any thing wrong when abroad, and was told that if he did so people would blame his father, he rarely ever repeated it. Would children be always as careful of the happiness and reputation of their parents as this little boy was, they would be saved from many distressing feelings and many bitter reproaches; and the blessing of God would no doubt constantly attend them. Can there be a more lovely sight than a family dwelling together in such unity, each constantly more anxious for the happiness of the others than for his own?

At one time, in 1829, his mother, in writing to his father, then absent, says: "John wished me to write you, 'That he wants you to come home; and that he learns pretty well; sometimes lazy, and sometimes does not feel very well; and that he *prays* for you, and mother, and sister, that we may all be prepared for heaven.' With regard to his prayers, I would observe, he is very particular and uniform. I sometimes fear lest a little pharisaical

righteousness should mingle in his religious duties; and at others, that his religion is only the power of education. At others, I hope and believe God is leading him by a way to perfect praise to himself from the mouth of a child."

Among the most remarkable features of this child's character was his *habit of self-denial.* If any thing of which children are fond, such as cake, or sweetmeats, or raisins, or nuts, or the like, was given him abroad, he would often refuse to taste it till he had brought it home, and divided it with his sister; and frequently he gave her the larger portion. Such little luxuries he often laid by for days, and then gave a good part away, generally wishing all about him to partake a little, as well as himself. His parents had taken much pains to cultivate this disposition, and it became a very prevalent motive in his daily conduct. He had never been taught to compare himself with other children, or allowed to suppose, that the attainments or the enjoyments of others could in any way diminish his own. He therefore knew nothing of rivalship, or emulation. To know more than others, or to have more of any thing, or to be treated better, never seemed to be an object of desire, nor was he at all troubled at others being superior to him. But one instance of jealousy of this kind is recollected. His mother gave him and his sister, one day, each a piece of cake, and told her, that, as John was the oldest, he ought to have the largest piece.

Soon after, another piece was given to each, and the largest piece to her. He immediately remonstrated, saying, with great earnestness, "I am the oldest, and the largest piece belongs to me." It was given him, when at once it appeared that he contended only for what he considered right, and not for rivalship, for he immediately gave her a considerable part of his.

The progress he made in knowledge was *without any stimulus from emulation.* He was never exhorted to do better than others, or led to believe he knew more than other children, or did better. To please his parents, and to obey God, were the motives presented to urge him on, when he needed it, except now and then a trifling reward, generally not promised, as an inducement to exertion. The way of knowledge was made pleasant to his view, and he eagerly pursued it, without thinking whether others were before or behind him.

Can it be needful for any child to have his jealousy of others constantly cherished, and his selfishness fostered, to urge him to any commendable attainment? Will it ever make the heart better, for a child to be mortified by being told of his own inferiority, or rendered vain by an idea that he is superior to others whom he daily sees? Is it not cherishing the very spirit of the fallen angels?

If others told John of his superiority, he was not pleased with it. His Sabbath school teacher once told him he got the best lesson of any boy in the

school. He came home, and said, "Mother, Mr. P. says I get the best lesson of any boy in the school. Is it so? An't he flattering me?" This was the manner in which he always received such expressions.

His desire to be of *some use to others*, and his determination to do whatever he could for himself, were very early manifested, and being encouraged by his parents, became prominent traits in his character. At last he disliked having any thing done for him that he could do for himself, or thought he could. Tell him any thing he could do would be useful to any one, and he would do all in his power, and appear extremely happy when he had succeeded. To help his parents gave him the utmost delight, and he rarely seemed to be too much fatigued to attempt it. When little more than three years old, he would do an errand in the neighborhood with perfect correctness, and always return immediately. No persuasion, or prospect of pleasure, could induce him to stay after his errand was done, unless he had permission.

A single instance, selected from many, will show what were his habits in this respect. When about four years old, he was sent to several houses to invite company to tea. The families were named in a certain order, and the individuals to be invited in order. He went to the first family, and invited each individual, one after another, in the precise order in

which they had been named to him, although to do it he was under the necessity of going out to invite some, and then returning to invite some whom he had seen. Then he went to the other houses in order, and invited each individual named as before, all with perfect precision. At one of the houses he was requested to tarry, but replied, he must go to another house. This was the last in the order named. He went, and did his errand without going in. But while the door was open, he saw a bird in a cage, which he thought very pretty. Such a sight he had not been accustomed to, and he was invited, and even urged to go in and see it, but he replied, "My mother told me not to stop," and ran home as fast as he could. As soon as he had repeated the several answers to his message, he began to tell what a pretty bird he saw, seeming much interested. He was asked, "Did you stop to see it?" "No," was his reply, "you told me to be quick. May I go back and see it, mother?" No instance is recollected in which he failed to do an errand correctly, and return as he was bid. If, when going or returning he was accosted by any one, he generally answered without stopping, and would hold no conversation to delay him.

One day, when going or returning with some message, a boy much older than himself met him, and began to ask him some impertinent questions, and to make some rude remarks. John looked at him calmly, and said, "It is *very* improper for you

to talk to me so," and went on; nor could the boy induce him to tarry a moment, or utter another word.

His quickness of reply often induced men, as well as boys, to ask him questions when they saw him in the street, for the sake of hearing his answer, that they might have it to repeat. Many of these sayings are current in the neighborhood, and often repeated. One will be given as a specimen.

The last winter, he was going on an errand, and a man at work in his shop called to him across the street, "John, where are you going?" without stopping, he replied, "I am going on a yeast voyage, and when I come back I'll give you a call."

Children who will follow his example in these things will be a great blessing to their parents, and be very happy in doing good. There was no one of the commands repeated by John so often as the fifth. "Honor thy father and thy mother, that thy days may be long in the land which the Lord thy God giveth thee," was often heard from him. He obeyed it in an uncommon degree, and if he had not long life on earth, there is the best reason to believe he enjoys a greater blessing in heaven.

Ever after he was four years old, and often before, he went almost daily to the post-office, to carry or bring letters and papers, although a part of the time half a mile distant; and indeed did most of his parents' errands in the neighborhood, with the utmost promptness and accuracy.

The *feelings* of this little boy were *very tender*, and so much excited when told of any one in distress, that his parents were obliged to avoid telling him, or reading to him the most affecting stories. When told of children who were destitute of food, he repeatedly refused to eat, so much did he feel for them; and when told of children who had lost their parents, and had no one to take care of them, he would weep and sob, and beg to know what became of them, and if they were good, and had God for their father?

From the time he was less than three years old, he voluntarily abstained from the use of sugar and other luxuries, to obtain a few cents to contribute for the relief of distress, or to send Bibles and the Gospel to the destitute. He was never urged to do this, but continued it more than two years steadily, although naturally very fond of these things. While a cent remained in his box he desired to give something at every public contribution, but rarely did he wish to use any of his money to purchase toys or luxuries. When a poor person called at the house, he would give all he had, if the person seemed in want, or told of children destitute of the comforts of life.

Some of the most pleasant visits he made, were at the house of a poor widow, when he was permitted to carry her milk or any other food; and he would go through snow, or wet, or cold, for this purpose, when he would scarcely go out of doors to play.

To perform acts of this kind his parents never denied him the opportunity, wishing him early to learn that doing good was to be the business of his life.

If he heard that a person was poor, the very next time he had an opportunity of being alone with that person, he would ask if they had things comfortable, and offer a supply, if answered in the negative. So habitual was this with him, that his parents were obliged to avoid mentioning such cases, lest by indiscretion he should hurt the person's feelings. So much alive were his sympathies to the sufferings of others, that it was often said he was hardly fit to live in the world, where sin and sorrow abound. The last time he performed an act of this kind, was about a fortnight before his death. A woman called at the house, and told a story of distress in her family that touched his feelings. He looked as if desiring to give something, and his mother told him he might. His box was handed to him, and he took out two-thirds of all the money he had, and gave it, and seemed satisfied. Such acts he never mentioned even to his father, unless reminded of them, and never seemed to think of deserving credit by them. His delight was in doing them, not hearing of them.

His sympathies were early excited in behalf of those destitute of the Gospel; and he often declared, that, when he should be a man like his father, he would go and preach Jesus Christ to them. It is not known that this was ever told him, but at times it

seemed the most settled purpose of his mind, at others he spoke of preaching the Gospel to those about him.

When told they were going to settle another minister in Brunswick, and that his father was no longer minister of that people, he seemed to think it was an infringement of his rights, and said, "When I am a man, I shall go to B. and take my father's pulpit, and preach to that people myself."

His feelings of kindness to all, affection for his friends, and patience under any suffering, increased by exercise, and very rapidly towards the close of his life on earth. Never was his improvement in every lovely trait of character, or in knowledge, so rapid as for a few months before his sickness. It was remarked, that the indescribable something, which gains the affections of every one, and secures by an eloquence that no one wishes to resist, whatever it pleads for, was becoming more and more discernable in him, and gaining attention every where, and exciting high expectation among all who knew him.

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## CHAPTER II.

### *Early Religious Character.*

But the most important part of his character, that which, it is believed, gave consistency, moral worth,

and uncommon loveliness to the whole, remains to be mentioned. It is not doubted by any who had daily opportunities to observe him, especially the last few months, that he was *truly pious*, and his parents believe he was so from *very early life*. At what time he was born again, they do not pretend to say or even to conjecture; but they believe it was before he was two years old. At that age, from the nature of the case, evidences of piety must be uncertain; but the steady growth of principles prevalent in later life can be traced to even that early period. We should remember, that a child will not appear like an adult. However pious, he is still a child, and his piety will appear connected with all the playfulness and innocent actions of childhood, many of which would be altogether unbecoming a Christian of adult age. *True religion is seen in the pure and benevolent spirit with which the appropriate actions and duties of each age and each situation are performed;* and conduct in every respect suitable to a pious adult, is as inappropriate to a pious child, as that of a child to such an adult. Is there not a very generally prevailing error on this subject, and much injury done by expecting too much from children who seem to have pious feelings? Are they not often too readily given up, on seeing lightness and playfulness in them, instead of being held up and instructed, so as to lead them in the way of holiness? Is not this well worth the serious consideration of parents, Sab-

bath school teachers, and ministers? Does not this restraint imposed on the young, when they appear ready to attend to religion, often render it irksome, and thus repel them from it into the regions of error and sin?

It has been observed, that John was a child of much prayer, and that his parents consecrated him to God with strong desires for his early conversion and sanctification. They felt that they had bound themselves to educate him for God's service. In performing this duty, they endeavored to give him a knowledge of divine truth while very young. The fundamental doctrines of Christianity were taught him as soon as he could understand them, and explained and illustrated in various ways, till he seemed to know what was meant, and to see the duties involved in these doctrines. He was told often, that God makes and supports every thing; that he is every where present, and knows all we do and think; that he loves those who are good, and condemns the wicked; that all are from the beginning sinful, and must repent, and become good before they can please God; that we should always be sorry when we sin, and pray, for Christ's sake, to be forgiven; that we should believe all we find in the Bible, and love God on account of his goodness, and love men because he commands it; that we should obey all his commands, and pray to him for all we need, and thank him for all we enjoy; that Jesus Christ

died to save sinners, and will give eternal life to all who come to God by him. These, with other important truths, such as, that the soul will never die; that we must all give account of our life at the day of judgment; that the bodies of all will be raised, and the righteous will be eternally happy, and the wicked eternally miserable, were early taught him, so as to influence his daily practice.

Very early he began to pray, first in a simple verse taught him, then to use the Lord's prayer; and as that is too comprehensive to be readily understood by such a child, he was taught to add a simple petition for a holy heart, and that God would bless him and keep him alive, and bless his father, and mother, and other friends. He was told to ask God for whatever he might need; and to remember he is always present, and knows what we pray for, and whether we really desire him to give it us.

The belief that God always saw him, seemed with him an operating principle. That God is every where, he once brought to view in the following manner: he was visiting from home, and was asked "if his mother was alone;" he answered, "no, she is not alone, for God is with her."

His parents endeavored to teach him what is meant by praying in the heart, somewhat in the following manner: "My son, if you are hungry, or if you wish very much to go with us when we ride, when you ask for something to eat, or to ride, you

feel earnest about it. This asking in earnest, is asking in your heart. So if you ask any thing of God earnestly, you pray in your heart." Other qualities of real prayer were illustrated in the same manner, but with more full explanations.

The winter before John was two years old, a female prayer meeting was held weekly at his father's house, and he generally spent the time in the room with those who met, and knelt with them in prayer. He was soon observed attempting to pray in a corner of the room by himself. Within a year he was known frequently to retire for prayer, and generally engaged in it of his own accord, when he lay down at night. This was continued with scarcely any interruption ever after. This might be considered merely an imitation of the practices of his parents, if it had not been continued, and connected with many other indications of piety, and attachment to religious duties. His attachment to public worship has already been mentioned. It is not recollected that he was ever unwilling to attend a religious meeting, however much fatigued. Generally he counted it a very great privation, if prevented from attending.

Family prayer he seemed to expect as much as his daily bread, and could hardly be made to believe any one would omit it. This appeared when he was between two and three years old, on one occasion perhaps worth mentioning. His father was absent one morning, and there being company, his

mother did not conduct family worship. Soon after the usual time, passing through the room where he and a domestic were sitting, she saw they had each a book, as was common. Knowing what they expected, but unprepared to pray, she sat down and read in the Bible. John then knelt. She asked him, "Do you wish to pray, my son?" "Yes," was his answer. "You may say your prayer." He repeated the Lord's prayer, and continued on his knees. She asked, "Do *you* wish to pray?—Mother feels that she cannot this morning." He repeated the Lord's prayer again, and continued still kneeling. Seeing they did not move, he turned to the girl and said, "Mary, kneel," then to his mother and said, "Mother, kneel." She asked, "Do you wish *me* to pray, my son?" He replied, "Yes." She took him by the hand, and told him they would go to her chamber and pray. At this he seemed overjoyed.

It will be readily supposed that this was not forgotten. It taught his parents the importance and necessity of entire regularity with such a child, and never to omit a duty, if they would have him regard it properly.

Incidents of this kind were frequent; it will be sufficient to mention one more.

When he was about four years old, his mother carried him on a visit to a relative in Portland. The family consisted of an elderly gentleman and lady, the former not a professor of religion. The day after

they arrived was the Sabbath. There was no family prayer in the morning, and his mother had retired to her room, leaving him with the family. About the usual time of morning prayer he took a Bible, laid it in a chair, read a few verses, and knelt down and prayed. He asked, that the Lord Jesus would be with his people that day, and bless them, and give them repentance for sin, and faith in him. He prayed for several other things, expressing most of his petitions in Scripture language, and with the utmost solemnity of manner. His mother came into the room just before he closed, and found the aged couple in tears. The lady soon after informed her what he had prayed for, and said she never heard a prayer that affected her so much. She seemed almost sure that this child had been sent there for her husband's salvation; but, it is feared, the impression on his mind was not enduring. The next morning the same duty was performed, while his mother was present, and her impression was, that his prayer was as appropriate as many heard in a social prayer meeting.

A young woman who lived with his parents says, he never omitted asking a blessing and returning thanks at the table, when his father and mother were absent; and it is certain he was never told to perform any such thing. On such occasions his prayer consisted of a few well chosen expressions from the Bible, or allusions to Bible history. As a specimen,

the words of one such prayer may be given. It was uttered a few months before his death, when he sat down to dinner with two females. "O Lord! bless us, and bless this food. Give us new hearts. And O Lord! make us perfect and upright, as thy servant Job was." This last expression he had never heard at table, but he had within a short time read the first chapter of Job, and appeared much interested in it. This may likewise show something of his habit of remembering and applying what he read.

At an early period in life he was accustomed, when told he had done wrong, to retire to a corner of the room, and sometimes to another room, and pray for pardon, and that God would make him a better boy. This was at first suggested to him, but became so common, that it was feared at one time he might regard it rather as a penance than a duty, and it was not encouraged on every occasion. Once, in particular, when for some offence he was denied the pleasure of walking in the garden with his mother and sister, he was overheard in his room, praying God to forgive him his sins, *and keep him from sin*, and give him a new heart, and mentioning his offence particularly. When he had offended in any matter of importance, one of his parents retired with him, and after admonition and prayer, and if absolutely necessary, a gentle chastisement, he was left alone, to repent and pray for pardon. He would spend some minutes alone, and then return to his

parents humble, and seek a reconciliation, when he seemed very happy.

The last time he was ever punished for a fault, his mother retired with him, and told him she must whip him, as she had threatened to do in case he should commit the fault, of which he had now been guilty. This he always dreaded very much, and now he begged, and promised, and wept, but his mother told him she must do it as she had declared. When he found he could not prevail, he suddenly stopped, and said, "Well, if you *will* whip me, kneel down and pray first." After prayer he submitted without the least complaint. His mother then determined that she would not again use the rod, except in some extreme case.

During the last year or two he was frequently heard in a room alone, praying for himself or some other person, and commonly continued several minutes in the exercise, his prayer consisting mostly of such passages of Scripture as he had heard used in prayer, or had lately read, and which seemed to him appropriate; and they were generally repeated one after the other in proper order, connected by his own words. From frequent exercise in this duty, he had become quite ready in the use of the appropriate language of prayer, and seldom appeared at a loss for words. The same remarks will apply to the prayers which he made with his sister, and when he was permitted to pray with either of his parents.

One of the last times when he prayed with his mother, he continued nearly five minutes in an appropriate manner, without any want of thoughts or words, with great apparent seriousness and feeling, and with entire confidence in the promises of God, which he recollected.

Sometimes, when hearing him pray in this manner, his mother has asked herself, can *this* be prayer, or what is it? This last time she asked him, "John, do you really mean as you pray? God knows whether you are sincere; and if you are not, you are very wicked to use such solemn words."

*J.* "I do mother—I pray from my heart."

His mother could not help exclaiming, Lord, out of the mouth of this babe, thou hast perfected praise to thyself. One expression he used was, that he might have faith, as a well of water in him, springing up unto everlasting life. He repeated many texts from John, 5th chapter.

It should not be understood, that there was *never* any thing in his prayers that would have been improper in those of a man, or that they were generally equal to those of a pious person of intelligence and riper years. They were the prayers of a child, but of one deeply impressed with gospel truth, and one commonly well acquainted with the language of Scripture and of prayer.

From his father's station in the ministry, no doubt he first received the impression that he should be a

preacher of the Gospel, and began early to hold meetings with his sister, and other small children, generally with great apparent seriousness. His discourses delivered from a chair, or some other elevated stand, sometimes continued several minutes, and showed great retentiveness and promptness of memory, and a clear understanding of many parts of Scripture, and of what he had heard in public worship. His parents did not discourage this practice, but took occasion from it to impress his mind more deeply with the awful solemnity of God's worship, and the importance of treating the Gospel with deep reverence, and likewise to correct any faults in his enunciation. His sentences were generally pronounced in a clear, natural, and forcible manner, with much animation, and showed much liveliness of fancy, and some good taste in the selection of language.

The only song or light poetry he ever learned was Hohen Linden. The first verse was repeated to him, when from home. He came home much pleased, repeating

> "On Linden when the sun was low,
> "All bloodless lay the untrodden snow," &c.

A book containing the poem was handed him, and he read it over till he could repeat the whole correctly, and took much pains to teach it to his sister. This poem he would sometimes repeat, standing in

the middle of the room, and raising or depressing the tones of his voice, and extending his arms, as he thought the scene represented, required.

His impressions in regard to his being destined for a preacher were early and abiding. Before he was four years old, his mother asked him, at a time when she was writing to his father, what she should write as his word. He replied, "Tell my father his son is growing up to be a minister of the Gospel of Jesus Christ." On this subject nothing had been said to him for weeks.

It may be proper here to give an instance of his discernment in regard to the conduct proper for Christians. When he was about four years old, his uncle, at tea one evening, was repeating some remarks he had heard against the temperance reformation. John asked, "Why do you talk so, S?"

His uncle asked, "How?"

*J.* "By talking such things."

*S.* "How should I talk, John?"

*J.* "About Jesus Christ, who died on the cross to save sinners. If you love Jesus, you will talk about him, I think you don't love Jesus."

His uncle asked why he thought so.

*J.* "Because, if you loved him, you would talk about him; and you don't talk about him, so you don't love him."

At this time his mother thus wrote to his father, then absent: "This evening J. has been much affect

ed by the account of Mr. Richmond's two children, who died, and asked with tears when he would die. On my answering that he must die sometime, but God only knew when; he asked if he should go to that wicked place? He was much affected for so young a child. I know, that it is possible all this goodness may pass away, like the early dew, yet I cannot but hope, and sometimes feel assured, that the work of grace will be early in his heart."

If his piety may be judged by the test which he applied to his uncle, there can be no doubt with regard to it, for scarcely did a few hours pass without his saying much about the Savior. He seemed constantly interested in his character, and this increased most rapidly for a few months before the close of his life.

From an early time of life, it was manifest, that John thought much while silent, especially on religious subjects, and prepared his questions with deliberation, and determined to be satisfied before he left the subject.

One trait in his mind was thought to be a little peculiar. Tell him any thing or read to him till he appeared to understand the subject perfectly, and then question him soon about it, and he would often seem to know little or nothing of what had been said or read to him. After several weeks, and sometimes months, he would mention the subject himself, and

tell what had been said, and then make his own remarks.

So much was this a trait of character, that the remark was often made in the family, when any particular subject had been conversed on, "After John has well digested it, he will bring it all out in order."

When between three and four years old, his mind at one time seemed much employed in thinking of death and the grave. After being silent for some time, one day he asked how people got out of the grave. He was told the spirit is not there, and the body is but dust. Sometime after he suddenly asked:

"Mother, what kind of body am I going to have when I rise from the dead?"

The fifteenth chapter of the first epistle to the Corinthians was read to him. But he was not content without asking numerous questions, and having the whole cleared up. When he ceased, he was asked if he understood it. He answered "yes," and appeared satisfied on that point nearly ever after. His mother could not at once tell where he had received the idea of the resurrection, but soon recollected, that several months before, on the death of a child in the neighborhood, she had told him something of it.

After he began to attend public worship on the Sabbath, he was rarely if ever absent, when the Lord's supper was administered. He was extremely attentive during that service, and at times appeared

in deep thought. After this he asked much about this sacrament; for several months before his death he was very desirous to partake of it, and repeatedly spoke of his desire to his mother. She told him she feared he did not love the Lord Jesus Christ, and was not prepared, but he insisted that he did. She then told him, that when he arrived at a suitable age, if he gave evidence of love to God, he should partake. He repeatedly asked his father, when the people would eat the body, and drink the blood of Christ again.

One instance, selected from many, may serve to show how he heard preaching. When about four years old he attended the religious anniversaries in Maine. In one of the sermons the name JEHOVAH was used. He was sitting by his mother's side, and looking at her, whispered, "Who does he mean by JEHOVAH?" She replied, "God." He asked, "Why don't he say *God* then?" During these meetings a gentleman called at the house where his parents stopped. John and a boy older than himself were playing in the yard. On going out he said to the boy, "Henry, are you going to meeting?" Henry replied with great indifference, "No." John seemed surprised, and said, "What, not want to go to the house of God 'to hear his word and sing his praise.'" When attending meeting, he would often be seen looking round, as if inattentive to what was said, but sometime after, it would appear by his remarks, that

he had heard and understood the discourse, and remembered much of what he scarcely seemed to heed.

Some months before his death, he heard, at meeting, the hymn beginning,

"Life is the time to serve the Lord."

It fixed his attention, and when he came home he requested to have it found for him, and read it till he could repeat the whole. Ever after, it was his favorite hymn, and he repeated, and tried to sing it on almost every occasion when he needed a hymn. A few other hymns he noticed in the same way, and committed to memory. The last was that beginning,

"Come, Holy Spirit, Heavenly Dove."

In this way too he learned many texts of Scripture, which he often repeated, telling where and from whom he had heard them. This was encouraged by his parents, as likely to induce him to be more attentive to preaching, and every duty of devotion, and at the same time storing his mind with divine knowledge.

When between three and four years old a stranger preached in Gorham. When he came home he was asked the text by one of the family who had not been at meeting, but with little expectation that a child so young would remember what had been said. He however spoke at once, "O, it was about

the mountains round Jerusalem." He wished to have the place found for him, (Ps. 125,) and learnt the two verses containing the text before meeting in the afternoon, by hearing them repeated a few times. The Psalm containing these verses he committed to memory as soon as he could read, and it was ever after a favorite portion of the Bible.

The parable of the prodigal son, the story of Ananias and Sapphira, the 12th chapter of Ecclesiastes, and the 3d of Matthew, were portions of Scripture which he early learned, and which never failed to interest and instruct him.

When the family removed from Gorham to East Hartford, a boy, son of the minister of the former place, with whom John was well acquainted, was very sick, not expected to recover. For him he was very anxious, often prayed for him, and inquired if he would go to heaven when he died. The boy died a few months after, and when John heard of it, he was deeply affected, and asked many questions about his piety, and what had become of him; whether he was happy in heaven or not. When told it was hoped he had become a good pious boy before he died, he seemed satisfied, as if he considered this the only important consideration. After this he frequently took the newspaper containing the account of this boy's death, and conversed about him and two other boys who had before died in the same town, saying, that three of his companions were gone

to eternity, and wishing to know if they were happy in heaven.

In the month of February there was a conference of churches in East Hartford, continuing a part of three days; and before the close, a revival of religion was manifestly in progress. John took a most lively interest in this meeting, and although the cold was extreme, he attended steadily, forenoon and afternoon, appearing to listen with great intensity. Christians were much quickened, and no one more than this child. From that time his progress in religion was very rapid, and scarcely any other subject could fix his attention. His conversation with his parents became almost exclusively religious. He would often break off in the midst of his most interesting play, and begin to speak of some religious truth, or some event interesting to the Christian heart, and wished, more than ever, all the information he could obtain on the subject.

In the course of the meeting the Rev. Mr. M. made an address to parents, and related an anecdote of a woman who had a sick child that begged her to pray for her. The mother replied that she could not. The child entreated, and could scarcely be consoled, when the mother refused. John's feelings were much excited, especially as he heard the child died without having any one to pray for her. He came home, and related to his mother, with many tears, what he had heard, and added, "O mother, I

wish I had been there, I would have prayed for her." Soon after this, the young woman living with his parents appeared to be convicted of sin and in distress. Conversing with his mother, John asked, "Why don't she repent, and believe on the Lord Jesus Christ?"

The next day, seeing her in tears, he asked her what was the matter. His mother hearing him, said, "She is anxious about her soul." "Well," he replied, "why don't she give herself up to Jesus Christ? He *died* to save sinners."

Her case continued to interest him much, and he frequently exhorted her to give up her heart immediately to the Savior. Once, when he asked her if she had done it, she replied, "No."

*J* ."Well, why don't you?" She said, "I can't, John."

*J.* "You must pray."

She asked, "Can't you pray for me?"

*J.* "The Bible says we must all pray for ourselves."

But he did often pray for her, and once, when at prayer in a room by himself, he was heard praying, "O Lord bless that girl in this house named R. who is anxious about her soul, and give her a new heart, and, O Lord, make her holy, and prepare her for heaven." It may be here remarked, that he had adopted, contrary to the custom he had uniformly witnessed, the practice of praying for every indivi-

dual by name, probably as conveying, in his view, a clearer and more direct understanding of his meaning.

Whenever his father returned from visiting the anxious, he was much interested to hear of those who hoped they had been born again; and seemed much engaged every where, conversing much about the truths of the Gospel, heaven, and the state of the blessed there. The young woman living with his parents, says, that for some time, every morning when he came from his bed, he repeated the Savior's words: "The hour is coming, in the which all that are in their graves shall hear his voice, and shall come forth, they that have done good to the resurrection of life, and they that have done evil to the resurrection of damnation." This may show something of the direction of his mind; but it was impossible for one that was not with him to know how much his thoughts ran on subjects of this kind, or how constant their influence was on his whole conduct for weeks before his sickness. No one else could form a just conception of the expression of his animated countenance, while conversing on religion, or of the intensity of his application while he listened to others, or know how frequently he alluded to these topics, or the earnest, though gentle, manner with which he urged others to perform their duty to God, and secure the salvation of their souls. To know how much influence the principles of reli-

gion exerted on him, it was necessary to see him at his play, and to hear his conversation while in bed, and especially when he sat with his mother, when no other person was present. Then it would have been seen, that "his conversation was in heaven," and that he was rapidly fitting for its blessed society, and its happy abodes and employments.

He would often leave his play to ask his mother something about the Lord Jesus Christ, or heaven, or more frequently to tell her something he had thought about them. When she entered into conversation with him, he would immediately leave his play, and talk to and question her, while she could attend to him.

He was uniformly playful and active and often busy in inventing new schemes of amusement either for himself or sister; and yet all this time religion was evidently the engrossing subject of his thoughts. His happy playfulness often led his mother to doubt the reality of his feelings; but the remainder of his short life convinced her that a child may be a real believer, and yet retain the warmth of childish feelings.

A few weeks before he was taken sick the only son of a neighbor died. He was a fine, amiable, intelligent boy, about twelve years old, much doated on by his family, and beloved by all who knew him. John heard of his sickness and death, and when his father attended the funeral he was so anxious to go

that he was permitted. In conversing with the mourners, his father remarked, among other things, the danger of parents making idols of their children; that is, loving them more than God, especially when they are uncommonly amiable and intelligent; and said, that God would, most likely, in mercy take away from his children whatever they loved more than him.

This funeral made a very strong impression upon John's mind. He looked with great earnestness at the body, and seemed in deep thought for some time after he returned home, when he suddenly asked, "Father, do you make an idol of me? Do you love me more than God?"

Many of his remarks, till his sickness, showed that he felt a lively interest in that boy's case. The same evening his mother conversed freely with him about death, and the necessary preparation for heaven. He seemed confident that he was prepared, and should go to heaven, when he should die; and this because he knew he loved the Lord Jesus Christ. He asked many questions about the boy whose funeral he had attended, and seemed much to regret that he could learn but little of his religious character.

One incident, which came to the knowledge of his parents after his death, will show his fearlessness in what he esteemed his duty. The circumstances are here given, *as reported* to them. One day his mo-

ther sent him on some errand at a distance. Several boys were playing in the street, some of whom asked him where he was going, and he told them. Soon, one of them seeing him crossing the street in the direction of a store where a boy, perhaps ten years old, was attending, told him that was not the way to the place where he was going. He replied, "I know it, but I am going to tell that boy there not to sell rum, for it is wicked, and my father says it is." He went to the door, and said to the boy, "It is wicked for you to sell rum, my father says it is, and I say it is, and you had better be at school." This was entirely of his own motion, neither did he ever tell his parents what he had done. They heard it as coming from the boy who was reproved. His father recollects his asking, some time before, if it was wicked to sell rum, and that he answered, he thought it so.

Some of his last prayers, previous to his sickness, were considered, at the time, remarkably solemn and appropriate, consisting mostly of passages of Scripture, aptly applied. It is recollected that he prayed much for sanctification, and fitness for heaven; frequently using the expressions, "Sanctify me through thy truth, thy word is truth," and "Give me a holy heart, and fit me for heaven."

Might it not be well for older children, and even adults, to reflect on the example of this little boy, less than five years old, and inquire whether they

are as well prepared for sickness and death, and to meet their God? Do the readers of this perform every duty as fearlessly, and seek as constantly to be united to Christ by a living faith, as he? Are they as much engaged for the souls of others, and is their conversation as much in heaven? Let each remember, that only they who have the spirit of Christ, are his; and only such as keep his commandments will have a right to the tree of life, and will be received at last into the holy city. Let each, then, live in the constant performance of every duty, and so be prepared for his last end.

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## CHAPTER III.

### *Last Sickness and Death.*

It now only remains to give an account of the sickness and death of this dear boy. All his loveliness, and intelligence, and piety, and promises of usefulness in the world, could not shield him from this common lot of all the descendants of fallen man. In this war there is no discharge; but the people of God, even if little children, will conquer death itself, through the blood of the Lamb and His sustaining grace.

March 2d, his sister was taken sick with the canker rash, (or scarlet fever.) John was extremely kind and attentive to her, often lying down with her, and condoling with her, and he even seemed desirous to have the disease, that he might bear her company. For three days he imagined sometimes that he had it. On the fifth, while in the morning learning his usual lesson in the Testament, he complained to his father that he was sick. He was told it was probably imagination, and was directed to go on with his lesson. He obeyed, but a few minutes after, looked up and said, "I am sick, father, *certainly*;" at the same time smiling, but looking very pale. He was told to lie down, and soon the physician was called, who prescribed the usual medicines with apparent success, so that in a few days he was relieved, and, in ten, appeared quite well, except that he was feeble compared with what he was when in health. His father then went to New Haven, to attend a four days' meeting; and John went, at his own desire, to visit a family of the congregation, and tarried several days. He came home on Sabbath morning, when the family came to meeting, and although he looked pale, he was so anxious to attend public worship, from which sickness had kept him three Sabbaths, that he was permitted, and went all day. He was very attentive and solemn during worship, and repeated the text and another verse connected with it, when he came home. This was a somewhat

common practice, although never imposed on him as a task.

During this visit several things occurred that show the direction of his thoughts, and the nature of his feelings. He was observed to be more reserved in the presence of the adults of the family, but when only the younger children were present, he was talkative, and often introduced religious conversation.

He conversed with some members of the family, however, familiarly about the meeting which had recently been held, and as if *he* had felt a deep interest in it. It was then observed by them, that his mind was mostly occupied by religious subjects. He spoke of Mrs. Judson, and particularly of little Maria J. and how much she suffered,—that she was in a heathen land and her mother sick; and her father was obliged to carry her out in the night to beg food for her. But added, she died and went to heaven; and in his view, that made up for all her toils and suffering.

At one time, in particular, he was heard exhorting these children, in the most solemn and earnest manner, to repent, and prepare to meet their God. He repeated many of the most solemn warnings of God's word, and seemed so earnest, as if he would take no denial, but was bent on leading them to repentance. One of them asked him, "What shall I do?" He replied, "You must pray." She

said, "I do." He answered, "But you don't pray enough. A thousand times would not be enough for me." He had several such conversations with them during the visit.

When about to leave the house, he said, "Now, H. and C. I shall be taken sick, and die, and you must remember what I have said to you. You must remember my dying words." It is not known how he came by that impression, but so his words proved to these children. They never heard his voice again. Had his friends thought him in immediate danger of death, these, and other children, would have been invited to see him; but he was gone before the opportunity occurred, and they will meet him next in eternity. May it be a happy meeting in the kingdom of heaven.

When he came home that morning, he said, "I shall never go to Mr. R.'s again." His mother asked, "My son, what do you mean?" He then, noticing her surprise, and perhaps thinking she disapproved of what he said, remarked, "I shall not go there for ten years."

That evening he conversed on religion with his usual interest and intelligence.

One circumstance will show that his mind was, at this time, much turned from the things of the world. Several times during the winter he had asked his mother to make him a ball to play with, when the snow should be gone. That he thought

*much* of having it, was evident, from his often trying to make one for himself. His mother told him when she could get a piece of leather she would make one for him. When he came home from this visit, he brought a ball neatly made and covered with green morocco. Soon after he came in, he said, "M—— I shall give you this ball." He was told it was the Sabbath and he had better not say any thing about his ball. He laid it away, but early Monday morning he presented it to his sister, saying, "I'll make you a present of that." He was asked why he gave it away, as he had wished for one so much, and it was a very pretty present. He replied, "I shall not want it." A book containing handsome prints was given to him. His mother observing he was not inclined to play, took the book and read from it. The stories were calculated to excite mirth; but he took little interest in them, though his sister laughed heartily. These things were noticed at the time, and his parents could not account for such a marked change in his conduct and feelings. The Lord was drawing him to himself, and fixing his thoughts and affections on heaven.

Monday, his neck appeared swelled, and he complained of being unwell, saying he was sick in his legs, and lay down on the carpet, as if fatigued. Gentle medicines were administered, and an ointment applied to the neck, which reduced the swelling; but Tuesday, he grew worse, and the physician

was called. There were fears that he would have the lung fever, but medicine produced a good effect, and on Wednesday he appeared better. Thursday evening he was suddenly attacked with an excruciating pain in the left side. So severe was the pain, that he could with the utmost difficulty refrain from shrieking. A blister had, on Tuesday, been applied to his chest, and he was told it was to relieve pain, and although he suffered much from it, he now begged his father to put on another blister. The doctor came just at this time, and applied a blister, and administered medicine which gave relief from the pain. When sick before, he had been loath to take medicine, but now he took it with readiness, when told what it was for. That night he desired his father to take care of him, and appeared much pleased when told he would not leave him. He desired his father to pray, that he might be holy, and fit for heaven, and rested some in sleep. The next day he appeared better, and that and the next day talked much, seeming very animated, especially when speaking of religion. He was frequently requested not to talk so much, but soon forgot the caution, when his countenance would assume a most animated expression, his eyes sparkling, and his voice uttering, in the sweetest tones, the feelings of a heart full of his favorite subject. At one time, alluding to his conversation with the children in his late visit, he said, "Mother, I spoke my words of death to H. and C."

She said: "Your words of death! my son, what do you mean?"

He replied: "I mean my words of death. I told them, if they did not repent, and love the Lord Jesus Christ, they would not go to heaven. I told them they *must* love Jesus Christ, and if they did not, God would *laugh* at them, for he says: 'I will laugh at your calamity, and mock when your fear cometh.'"

Here his countenance appeared lighted up with the most animating interest, and he used a strong emphasis, and brought down his hands with an emphatic gesture. He continued: "I told them if they did not love Jesus Christ, they would go to hell, and God would say to them 'Depart ye cursed into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.' But I told them, if they did love the Lord Jesus Christ they would go to heaven, and he would say to them; 'Come, ye blessed of my Father, inherit the kingdom prepared for you from the foundation of the world.'"

His mother asked him, "Did you really say so, John?"

He answered: "Yes, was it right mother?"

She feared at the time that his disease had affected his memory, and that he had only intended to say it, or imagined he said it. This had early been the tendency of his mind, and till within a year, he did not seem fully, in his narratives, to distinguish

between what was real, and what he had dreamed or imagined. But within a year he had become very particular in regard to truth, and so careful, that it was with difficulty his parents could induce him to promise any thing positively and unconditionally, he seeming to fear he might fail in the fulfillment, and be guilty of falsehood. He would therefore say, when asked if he would do any thing at a future period, "I will endeavor to," or "I think I will." His mother did not know but by reason of his disease this caution might be forgotten, but on inquiry of the family where he was visiting, and of the children with whom he conversed, it was found that he had used this language, and much more of like import, and with great earnestness and solemnity, as though determined not to give over till he should lead those children to repentance. Will not the reader join with the writer in the earnest prayer, "God grant that his efforts may not be lost on those for whose salvation he appeared so earnest, nor upon others who may read this narrative?"

Had his parents supposed John so near his end, they might have recorded many striking sayings uttered during these two days, and would have more frequently encouraged a full expression of his feelings on many occasions. But as his lungs were inflamed, and his body growing weaker, they deemed it necessary to repress his disposition to talk, and as they hoped to see their son well again, they kept no

notes of his conversation, and are obliged to depend on their memory, and that of a few friends who were with them, for what is here recorded.

The same day he had been lying silent some time, when he said, "Mother, I shall want my father called to see his dear son die."

She said, "I hope, my son, you are not going to die. We hope God will spare you to us. How wretched we should be without our dear son."

*J.* "Well, when I come to die, you will call my dear father out of the study, won't you?"

*M.* "Yes, my son, if we think you dying, your father will not leave you." He appeared satisfied.

It is not pretended to account for his abiding impression that he should die. His parents and friends all expected him to recover, and no conversation is recollected that could have given him the impression; but it is doubtful whether he ever, for more than a few minutes, thought it likely he was to be well again, or desired it, except now and then, when encouraged by others.

John's attachment to his father had ever been very strong from infancy, and was manifested on every occasion. Frequently, during a few months before his sickness, it seemed as if he could not find words to express his affection. If his father was from home he felt very lonely, and the moment he was seen returning, he would meet him and express the greatest joy at seeing him. Whenever he sat down, John

would come round him, and as soon as an opportunity offered, climb into his lap, and putting his face up to his, repeat in the most affectionate tones: "Dear father! *My dear father!*" This affection appeared to the last in his constant desire to have his father with him, and his willingness to take from his hand whatever he was requested. If he appeared uneasy or impatient, his father's presence would almost always calm him; and if unwilling to take a medicine, a few words of reasoning from him removed all objections. The greatest unwillingness was overcome by his father telling him he must go out of the room and leave him if he would not take the medicine, and even this was necessary but once. When his father could hold him up, he always seemed most happy.

The day his sister was taken ill, all the family but his mother and children had gone to Hartford to attend a protracted meeting. After dinner his little sisters went to sleep. He lay down before the fire, and said nothing for some time. Suddenly he roused up, looking dejected and unhappy, and exclaimed, "Mother, if my father was dead, and you were a *widow*, how lonely we should be! Do let me go and see Mr. H." meaning a near neighbor. He went, and staid till about the time when he expected his father home. He had doubtless been thinking what our situation would be, should his father be always gone, as on that day; and the bare thought of it made

home appear gloomy, and filled him with anguish. Dear lovely boy! He "who tempers the wind to the shorn lamb," took him to himself before that day of sorrow and loneliness had fallen on his mother. He was spared the anguish of seeing his mother a widow, and himself and sisters fatherless.

The afternoon of the day of the last mentioned conversation, he said, "Mother, I shall be a young preacper. I shall have two kinds of sermons, one to the righteous, and one to the wicked, and when my father is taken away, I shall preach them to this people. I shall tell them to love the Lord Jesus Christ, or they won't go to heaven." He was requested not to say any more, but his mind seemed all the time in vigorous action, and it was difficult to keep him within the bounds of prudence. That night he appeared so much better, that at his request the family took tea in the room where he was, and he sat at the table with them. The physician then could see nothing in the way of a speedy recovery.

The next day his disease took another unfavorable turn, but still the danger did not appear great. His parents did not, however, neglect to converse with him frequently respecting the necessity of being always prepared to meet God. It never moved him in the least to tell him he might die, nor did he once manifest any unpleasant apprehensions at the thought, or the least unwillingness to meet death at any time. His father often proposed, when alone

with him, to pray, asking him what he should pray for. Several times he replied, "Pray that I may be holy," or, "Pray that I may have a good heart." When asked if he prayed for it in his heart, he always replied, "Yes."

It is not recollected that he ever was unwilling to hear the Bible read, or to unite in prayer, however much he was suffering at the time, although it sometimes required great effort to avoid groaning, or to keep still during prayer. Repeatedly, while sick, he requested his mother to read the Bible to him, and to have one of his parents pray with him, and was always desirous to have family prayer in his room. This attachment to the Bible and to prayer had been steadily increasing for years, and now it seemed his delight to draw near to God, in whose service he hoped to live eternally.

Would it not be well for young and old to keep in mind, while forming habits for life, and perhaps for eternity, that those much attached to prayer while in health, who have never neglected it in its proper seasons, have generally found their sweetest consolations in it on their sick and dying bed? How lovely such habits and attachments are in a sick child, no one can know but those who have watched such an one in his moments of pain and distress, and heard expressions of love to God, and resignation to his will, flowing from his lips. The comfort which the recollection of this affords to mourning

relatives, is known by those who, like the parents of this lovely boy, have seen their fondest earthly hopes cut off in the death of a pious praying child. It sweetens sorrow, it removes the dread of death, it enables them to bless God for taking the loved one from the pains, and temptations, and sins, and sorrows of this world, to the blessed rest of heaven.

Let affectionate children think of the feelings of their kind parents, should they be called to the grave early, and prepare to give them comfort in the hope of meeting them in heaven. Should this little book be the means of leading one soul to such a preparation, this beloved child's death will not have been in vain.

Let parents, too, think of this, when striving, by God's blessing, to form the character of their children for life, for death, for the judgment, and for eternity.

The morning after the conversation above mentioned, while his mother was sitting by his bed, John began to speak: "Mother, I feel as if I could stand there."

*M.* "Where, my son?"

*J.* "There."

*M.* "Stand where, my son?"

*J.* "At the judgment seat of Christ."

It appears that he had been thinking of it, and did not at first consider that she did not understand, as well as he, what he meant. She asked him,

"Who will be your surety there?"

The moment she used the word surety, she thought he would not understand its meaning, and was about to explain, but he replied, "God."

*M.* "In whose righteousness do you expect to be accepted?"

*J.* "Christ's."

*M.* "Do you expect to be justified in Christ's righteousness, or to stand there because you have been a good boy?"

*J.* "I expect to be justified in Christ's righteousness."

It should be here stated, that the words he used had been frequently explained to him, and he had heard them used and illustrated, till he seemed to fix a definite meaning to them. The evidences of a preparation to meet God were stated to him, and he as usual asked questions, but they are not particularly recollected.

Either in this conversation, or another about the same time, he was asked why we might hope to be justified in Christ's righteousness. He replied,

"Because he died to save sinners."

*M.* "Why do *you* hope for this?"

*J.* "Because I am a sinner."

He uniformly maintained, that he repented of his sins, and believed in Christ; and his parents recollect not the least reason to doubt his entire habitual confidence in all the declarations of God's word. He always appeared to act on the conviction of their

truth, as much as on the truth of what his father or mother said to him. Such unhesitating, unsuspecting confidence is rarely seen even in old Christians. He seems never to have learned to doubt them.

Within a few months of his death, he had repeatedly called his mother to his bed, after he retired at night, and requested her to tell him all she knew about the children in heaven, refering to the Savior's words: "Suffer little children to come unto me, and forbid them not, for of such is the kingdom of heaven." While sick, he again desired her to tell him *all* she knew about them, and particularly what they did in heaven. When she had finished, he said,

"I WISH TO JOIN THAT COMPANY OF CHILDREN AROUND GOD'S THRONE."

His mother asked, "Are you willing to die, and leave your dear father and mother to go and join them?"

He replied with perfect calmness, "Yes."

Other things were said, daily manifesting the same feelings, while he was every hour showing the liveliest attachment to his parents, and seemed unwilling to have them out of his sight.

One day his father was sitting on the bed holding him up, as he often requested, when he said, "My son, we hope you will get well, but it may be God's will that you shall die. Are you willing?"

*J.* "Yes."

*F.* "Where will you be, my son, if you die?"

*J.* "*Where God pleases to put me.*"

*F.* "Are you willing that he should do with you as he may please?"

*J.* "Yes."

*F.* "Do you often pray to God in your heart?"

*J.* "Yes."

His father could, at the time, discover no reason to doubt that he understood fully what he said, and felt as he expressed himself. Neither on mature reflection has he discovered the least evidence to the contrary, or any reason to doubt that this was the habitual state of his mind during his sickness. It should be kept in view, that every one about him, all this time, expected him to recover, and so expressed themselves when they spoke to him. Will not many an old Christian feel reproved by the submission of this babe in Christ? Should we doubt in the case of an adult, who uniformly used such language, and lived consistently with it, that he was prepared for a happy eternity? Would it not constitute the happiest reflection of pious mourners that, before death, the thoughts of the father, or mother, or dear companion, were in heaven, to which the soul looked with the utmost calmness, desiring to be with Christ and the saints around God's throne? And what reason can be given, why even little children should not cause the same joy by such conversation? Why should not parents and children labor and pray that they may talk with God, like Samuel,

and be consecrated to him from infancy, like Jeremiah; and know by experience his truth and love from a very little child, like Timothy? What can make them so lovely, so dutiful, so happy? What can so secure them against the temptations of life, or fit them so well for a sick and dying hour?

John had always, especially within a few months, been very attentive to his father's concerns, and seemed determined to know all he could learn about them, and to help him all in his power. It was, for months, a common saying in the family when his father was absent, and they wished to know where he had gone, or what he had been doing, or when he would return, "Ask John, he knows all about it;" and it was rare that he could not give the desired information. He had told much before his sickness, of helping his father in the garden, when the time should come; and when first taken sick, he requested him not to do all the planting before he should get well to help him. But about the time of the last conversations mentioned, he appeared to lose all interest in this and every earthly concern. He never after introduced conversation about them, and if others did so, he would not continue it, but seemed perfectly indifferent to it.

As many as three times, when his parents and the physician thought him getting better, the disease, without any assignable cause, suddenly put on a new and unexpected form, and became more violent.

But as it seemed to yield to the operation of medicine, and his constitution had been good, and he complained but little, except when attacked anew, his parents expected his recovery till the last hour of his life. On this account they held fewer conversations with him towards the last, and kept no record of what he said, so as to preserve the order of time. He was feeble, and it caused him pain to talk much, and they hoped for better opportunities. Like many others, they put death at a distance, and neglected to do what they now wish had been done; but the opportunity is for ever gone.

Several times, however, he commenced conversation himself, always about religion, or heaven, or something connected with them, and his father or mother checked him, lest he should injure himself. What is recollected will now be given, without any certainty as to the order of time.

At one time, as he was sitting on a chair, and his father standing by him, he looked up with a most affecting expression, and laboring for breath, said, "Father, I think God is carrying on a work." His father asked, "Where, my son?" He replied, "In my heart." He seemed willing and desirous to converse, but as his lungs were then weak and inflamed, he was requested not to say more.

One day during the last week of his life, his mother being about to pray with him, asked him what

she should pray for? He replied, "That I may be recovered to health."

*M.* "Should I not rather pray that God's will may be done?"

*J.* "Yes."

*M.* "Are you willing I should pray that God's will may be done, that he may take you away, if he pleases, or raise you up?"

*J.* "Pray that God's will may be done."

Sometimes he was very nervous, and would ask those near him to go away, and leave him alone; but if prayer was proposed, he always desired it, and never did he show any disrelish for this, or for hearing the Scriptures. He often requested his parents to read the Bible to him, and they generally asked, where he would have them read. He generally referred it to them, but once requested to have the first chapter of Job read, and once where it says, "Son give me thy heart." During the reading he was always attentive, and if not too weak, or in great pain, had some questions to propose as to the meaning of the part read, or the character of the persons named. The character of Job he admired, but it puzzled him much to discover why such a good man should be so much afflicted. That wicked people should be punished, he admitted; but then, why the good must suffer, was a mystery, as it is to many. When told, however, that God did it to make them better, and

prepare them for more happiness in heaven, he was satisfied.

One day lying in bed, he groaned, and complained of pain. To divert his mind, his mother said to him, "Think, my son, there is a man at Mrs. ——'s who is much more afflicted than you are. He cannot help himself at all." His father was in the room, and he said, "Father, you had better go and see him, and talk to him closely." His mother asked him, "Closely about what, my son?" He replied, "You know." His parents had no doubt what he meant, for he frequently spoke of talking closely to persons about religion, and now he wished to use no more words than necessary, as he spoke with pain.

Another time, when suffering much with a blister, and probably with internal pains, his mother remarked, "Though you suffer much, my dear son, God does not willingly afflict or grieve the children of men." He asked, "Why don't he?" He was told of the love and goodness of God, and that our sins are the cause of our suffering—that he suffered, because his parents from Adam had sinned, and he had sinned against God, who is so kind and merciful. He seemed to have discovered consolation in this truth, and complained very little ever after.

His convictions of sin appear to have been, at times, very clear, and in a degree distressing, as is probably the case with all Christians. Early in his

sickness he said, "Mother, I cannot help sometimes bursting into tears."

*M.* "Bursting into tears! For what, my son?"

*J.* "The same that —— —— did that Sabbath." (Referring to a person he had seen to weep in meeting.)

*M.* "Well, what did —— —— weep for?"

*J.* "You know."

*M.* "But I meant you to tell me what you think he did for."

*J.* "Because he had lived in rebellion against God so long."

How abiding this conviction was, no one can tell; but he often appeared grieved and humbled, when his sins were mentioned, and frequently prayed for pardon, and a new and holy heart. It may not be improper here to mention, that his parents had never encouraged him to believe that he had been born again, fearing that it might have an ill tendency. They taught him the truths of the Bible, and gave him a sketch of the lives of eminent Christians, and left him to form his own opinion of himself. Without her intention, he once got the idea that his mother considered him a Christian, but it was not cherished by any encouragement. Yet he scarcely appeared for months, if for years, to entertain a doubt of his being a new-born person; always spoke as considering himself a Christian at heart, and acted

on that supposition, showing, that he considered pious people his companions and dearest friends.

The last Sabbath of his life he appeared very ill in the morning, and his parents requested prayers in public, "That God would sanctify his soul, and either restore him to health, or take him to himself." At night he seemed better, and his mother told him "the people had been praying for him, and God had heard their prayers, and she hoped his life would be spared." He asked, "Why do you wish my life to be spared?" She replied, "Because we should be so unhappy without our only son." He expressed no desire to recover.

This week he was feeble, and sometimes nervous, and his parents discouraged his talking. Sometimes he seemed in deep study, and then would commence talking on some topic of religion, and continue till he was told he must not talk any more. Not unfrequently he was stopped immediately before finishing a sentence. A few things are remembered. One day he said, "Mother, ——— and ——— make very foolish prayers."

*M.* "How so, my son?"

*J.* "Because they do. I told them if they did not pray better, God would not hear them. I told them they must pray better, or they would not go to heaven."

This week he twice, without any introduction, told his mother he thought he could stand before the

judgment seat of Christ; and when asked if it was because he had been a good boy, or because he loved Christ, he replied, "Because I love Christ."

Repeatedly, when requested to take medicine, and wishing to be excused, he was told he must take it, because the doctor was very kind to him, and wished him to get well. He asked, "What makes the doctor wish me to get well?"

One day this week, his father being alone with him, he said, "Father, I want to talk with the doctor."

*F.* "About what, my son?"

*J.* "About Jesus Christ."

The doctor had, by his constant attendance and kindness, won his affection, and he had heard that he was not a professor of religion. This was no doubt the occasion of his wish.

But he never had an opportunity to do what he really desired.

The day previous to that of his death he seemed relieved, and showed no symptoms of specific disease, except a cough, and a leaning to the left side. His parents and the physician thought him better, although feeble. Each of his parents, when alone with him, prayed with him repeatedly. When his father asked what he should pray for, John replied, "Pray that I may be holy, and fit for heaven." When asked if he often prayed for it in his heart, he said, "Yes."

Once when asked by his mother what she should pray for, he replied, "That this sickness may not be unto death."

*M.* "Shall I pray for that, or that the will of God may be done?"

*J.* "That the will of God may be done?"

This elliptical mode of speech he often used, especially when it hurt him to speak. His language was always concise, and perspicuous, but more so when sick, than ever.

This day he was told his father had bought some figs, and it was hoped they would strengthen him, so that he would get well. He asked, "Why do you wish me to get well?" seeming to wonder that his parents could desire it, when he desired rather to depart and be with Christ.

That evening he was very much distressed, but could specify no particular part where he suffered. When asked where he felt bad, he said, "All over." He frequently desired to have his pillow placed on different parts of the bed, but after a while said, there was no comfortable place in his bed. He could be still but for a moment, yet when his father proposed to pray with him, he at once became calm, and so continued till the close of prayer.

The next morning he seemed better, and the physician had hope of a speedy recovery, left him some bark, and directed more nourishing food than had been given him. He was at first loath to take the

bark, but his mother told him his father was making a strawberry bed in the garden, and that he might pick some for her, when they should grow. He took the bark, but said nothing.

He was placed in a chair, at the window, to see a man at work in the garden, but appeared to have lost all interest in it. When spoken to about it, he made no reply, but looked at his mother in such a way that she thought, "He has done with this world; why should I trouble him?" During the day he gained strength, and ate with a little more appetite, but said very little. It seemed to give him pain to talk.

In the afternoon his mother was holding him up on the couch provided for him near the fire, when she said to him, "My son, we hope God will bless the means for your recovery, but you may die. Are you willing to die and leave your dear father and mother?"

He replied, "Yes."

*M.* "What makes you willing?"

*J.* "I cannot tell you;" meaning, probably, that it hurt him to talk, as he had previously said.

*M.* "I wish you to tell me in your own words."

*J.* "I cannot."

*M.* "Is it because you think you have been a good boy, or because you love Christ?"

*J.* "Because I love Christ."

At his request his mother read to him from the

Bible, and related the history of Joseph, which he always admired.

As he sat on the couch, and could not converse, his father gave him two dollars to amuse him. His mother seeing him playing with them, asked him how many Bibles they would buy for those poor children who had none. He answered, "I do not know." Sometime after, he asked how many they would buy. Towards evening he showed them to his father, and said, "Father, may I *own* these?" distinguishing between *have* and *own*. Probably he thought of the Bibles, as he had often wept when told of the poor heathen children who have no one to tell them of the Savior, and spoke frequently of sending them the Bible, and repeatedly said, "When I am a man, like my father, I will go and preach Jesus Christ to them." He had a Bible sent to him by Mr. R——, of Philadelphia, which he valued highly, both because it was sent to him by a good man, and because it contained the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

In the evening he seemed stronger than he had been for some days, and sat up in a chair more than an hour. About eight o'clock his father came from the study, and found him sitting, but looking distressed, and soon removed him to the couch and held his head. Before being removed he seemed distressed for breath, and frequently coughed without raising; seeming very weak at the lungs.

His father asked him, "Can't you, my son, cough so as to raise?" He shook his head, meaning No.

Soon he said, "O dear! I wish I could cough so as to *raise*." Then in a few minutes, "O dear! I am a *poor* boy. Ain't I a poor boy, father?"

His distress increased fast, and soon after being laid on the couch, he complained of being cold, and was wrapt in a warm covering. He wished to be removed, and when put on the couch again his father felt a cold sweat on his face, and observed, "Now we must be sure an abscess is forming;" this having been mentioned as the greatest danger, and a cold sweat the common sign of it. Soon he asked again to be removed, and seemed in more distress. His mother removed him; he immediately sank down as if he had fainted. She cried, "O husband! he is going." His father ran round the couch, and laid him on it, and held his head on his own bosom, wiping the cold sweat from his face, and bathing his head in camphor. He seemed to revive a little, and asked to be again removed, but was told to remain a minute. His parents perceived he was dying, and committed his soul to his faithful covenant God, to whom they had early dedicated him for life, death, and eternity. His father asked him, if he knew his father and mother. He looked at each, earnestly and affectionately, but said nothing. Soon he gasped twice, then breathed a few times with difficulty, and his soul was gone. For a mi-

nute it was thought *possible* that he had fainted, and efforts were made to resuscitate him, but in vain; his soul had been received by angels, and gone to join the company of children around God's throne. There he had wished to go: that he might be prepared for it, he had prayed thousands of times, and desired others to pray; there all his inquiries will be answered by infinite wisdom, and his thirst for knowledge, and his ardent desires for sanctification will be completely satisfied. His trials are over, his sorrows ended; the perils of the journey are all surmounted; he has reached his eternal home, and found ease from pain, rest from toil; and all the powers of his active, vigorous mind are now employed in looking into God's works, and the ways of truth, and serving him whom angels worship and saints delight to praise.

In a few minutes his features were all composed, as when asleep, with that mildness and calm dignity for which he was ever admired by all who knew him.

His parents had not allowed him to be called beautiful, lest it should corrupt his mind and make him vain; but as he lay before them lifeless, few that saw him, but exclaimed, How beautiful! How lovely even in death!

It was Friday, April 8th, 1831, about nine o'clock at night, when the soul was liberated from earth. The tempest was raging without, and thick darkness covered the land; but all was peace within, fit em-

blem of the agitations of the expiring body, and the peace of the soul resting on the bosom of a Savior.

Thus he lived his appointed time, and thus he died, aged four years, eleven months, and four days.

After the body was placed in the coffin, all left the room but his father. He was overheard bemoaning himself in the language of David. "'My son, my son, would to God I had died for thee.' Oh, my beloved son, thou wilt no more come to me, but I shall go to thee; and it may be soon."

Lines by a Lady in E. H. on learning these expressions of grief by Mr. M——.

One look before we part,
And it must be the *last;*
How does my grief-worn heart
Keep lingering o'er the past!

When thou in all my way
Wast like a *beam* of light,
My joy throughout the day,
And on my prayer at night.

My blighted hopes I mourn;
My earthly ties are riven;
I could have suffering borne,
My *life* I could have given;

To save thee from the *dust;*
Yet I *would* not restore,

For go to thee I *must*,
But thou to me no more.

'Twas not in all my fears
To class thee with the *dea*
I never thought thy years
So briefly *could* have fled.

And now the grave will tear
Forever from my view,
This form in death so fair,
In life so lovely too.

One look and thou art gone;
O what has earth beside;
My Son, my only Son,
I could for thee have died.

The Sabbath came, and the numerous school assembled in the house of God; the body was carried there, and lay near the place where he had delighted his teacher and his companions with promptness in reciting his lesson, and with his affection, and docility, while receiving instruction. The Rev. Dr. Hawes, of Hartford, who had been lately called to suffer a bereavement similar to that of the mourning parents, addressed the audience in a sermon not designed as a funeral discourse, nor to speak of the dead, but to call the living to a preparation for eter-

nity. It is believed his words were not lost, as seed sown by the way-side.

From the house of God the people repaired to the repository of the dead. There were seen no costly array of mourning apparel, and no useless funeral pomp. Six boys, three of whom had been John's class-mates in the Sabbath School, carried his body to the grave, and his parents and friends, and all the school followed; and there was real sorrow; for many knew him, and all who knew him, loved him.

When they arrived at the grave, and the body had taken possession of its resting place, the bereaved father addressed the numerous assembly, saying: "My friends, when I came among you a few months ago, little did I think it was to lay my beloved son so soon in this earth, with your ancestors and friends. But the Lord knoweth best what should be, and to him I submit. He is my witness, that I have not shrunk from even this, could I see your salvation. Yes, my friends, he is my witness, that when I have been praying for the outpouring of his Spirit on you, the question has seemed to come to me plainly, almost as in words, 'Are you willing, as a condition of your prayer being answered, to give up all? Are you willing, if I please, to be laid aside from your labors? Can you consent to part with even that beloved boy?' And I have answered, 'Yes, Lord; send thy Spirit, and take what thou wilt.' He has

taken me at my word; he has poured out his Spirit, and taken my son; and if it can be the means of your salvation, I *joyfully* submit. O, prepare, young and old, to follow him, and join with me and say, 'The Lord gave, and the Lord hath taken away, blessed be the name of the Lord.'"*

Many were the tears shed around the grave, and as the people retired, it is believed many went to pray that God might prepare them to go in peace, as the child had gone.

Over the grave of this child has been erected a plain marble slab, with this inscription:—

In Memory of
JOHN M.
Son of Rev. ASA and Mrs. JANE G. MEAD,
Born at Brunswick,
In the State of Maine, May 4th, 1826.
Died in the hope of a blessed immortality, April 8th, 1831.
LUKE 18 : 16, 17.

The wound made in his father's heart by this bereavement was deep, though he saw the hand

* The speaker on this affecting occasion, the father who thus committed the remains of a beloved son to the dust, was himself called to resign his spirit to God on the 26th of October following, and his body now reposes by the side of

which inflicted the blow, and bowed under the rod; and though no murmuring or rebellious word was ever uttered, but the expression often, "that he loved God better since the chastisement;" yet it was evident to all who had much intercourse with him, that his grief was great; and that the world and earthly attachments appeared to him in their true light, since that night when his cherished expectations were suddenly cut off, and this darling son expired in his arms.

He often afterwards observed he had no wish left, but to serve his Savior and Redeemer, and to give to him every power, and affection, and faculty of his soul, and then to be received home. It was observable, that his prayers, his preaching, and indeed his whole demeanor, partook of the savor of this affliction. Death, and eternity, and heaven, were topics much dwelt on from this time. When the veil which hides the eternal world was lifted up, and this beloved child entered its blissful regions, he seemed to have caught a glimpse of its glories, and ever after to have "endured, as seeing him who is invisible." He had several times, during the summer, remarked, "Who knows, but one design of God in removing

his sleeping babe. May that blessing which he so ardently sought at the sacrifice of his dearest comforts, and which beyond doubt was his strongest desire in death, be abundantly conferred on his bereaved flock, and on their children, and children's children.

John was to prepare him to be my instructer in Christ? Who knows but I am soon to follow, and he has been taken a little while before that he might be fitted to be my ministering angel, to lead me to the knowledge and glories of my Savior?"

The following poetry, composed by a lady of East Hartford, will speak to the heart of each bereaved parent, while it shows the feelings cherished by all who knew this child. It was addressed to his mother a few days after the funeral.

TO MRS. MEAD.

He was a lovely boy;
Health spread its halo round him, and the smile
Of animated joy was blended with
A look of strong and brilliant intellect,
That might not pass unnoticed. The stranger's
Eye would fasten on a form so full of
Interest—and friends would day by day drink
In his winning graces; yet in the minds
Of all a monitory feeling dwelt,
Which oft-times bodes the wreck of early hopes.

He seemed not for this earth—so young, so ripe
For heaven—yet there was still a trusting hope
Deep rooted in thy breast, that he was sent
To labor in the vineyard of his Lord.

O hast thou not, fond mother, in the full
Rapture of thy heart, oft cast a mental
Eye into the future, and in one glance
Beheld a life of deep devotedness—
A herald of the cross—a strong man arm'd,
Imbued with wisdom from on high—mighty
In word and deed—say, has he thus appeared
To thy fond vision? And then would come the
*Parting*, O, from thee—from all—his childhood's
Home—its altar—and the deep retirement
Consecrate to God; with this too would come
The pledge and promise held to those whose love
And faith could give up all, ev'n all for Christ;
And thou wast far above the world. Perchance
A different scene might be at times brought
Up to view. But let a veil drop o'er it;
'Tis a mother's privilege to draw the picture
As she lists—dipt in the warm affections
Of the heart, the pencil takes its coloring:
And O how strong and vivid are its hues.

The hand of God was on him, and he fell,
Ev'n in the spring time of his life, with all
His blossoms gathered round him. The promised
Fruit—where is it? Maturing in the sky
Amid the light and warmth of uncreated Love.

And dost thou weep? 'tis nature's hallowed
Boon—in mercy giv'n to soothe the stricken

Soul. Thy tears may flow, and thou wilt find them
Coursing down thy cheeks, when in thy lonely
Hours no eye but his who seeth in secret,
Marks thee. When summer twilight clothes the heav'ns
In beauty, and the uplifted stars seem
Praising their Creator, thou wilt think on
Thy belov'd. For then it was thy wont to
Lead him from the world—to guide his spirit
Heaven-ward—its centre and its hope.

He will
Be still before thee—his playful movements
Round the hearth will meet thee there, and his all
Questioning tones will steal upon thine ear
Amid the voices of the world, with a
Subdued and holy sweetness that will sink
Into thy heart. Yes, and the last, last look—
Enough—here was a trial of thy faith,
And thou didst prove in whom thou hast believ'd.

C. S.

And is not the dear child's lot a blessed one? He was, from the first, the subject of many prayers for the blessing of God upon him. He was the constant care of parents who had no greater delight, connected with this world, than to make him happy. His naturally lovely disposition was cherished to the

utmost, so that he was ever a most happy child. His mind was early cultivated with care, and fed with knowledge and divine truth, and kept constantly in happy exercise. He was the object of approbation and love to all who knew him; and enjoyed uniformly good health, and lively, cheerful spirits. But above all, he early had the spirit of piety found in him, and after a short probation on earth, has been called from all trouble and sorrow, to mansions of everlasting bliss, to serve the God whom he loved and adored, for ever and ever. True, he left his beloved parents, and numerous friends, and brilliant earthly prospects, when, to his young mind, all appeared fair before him. But his parents mourned not as those without hope. Their beloved child was only called a little before them, and all that he loved of God's people will soon be with him, never to part. The best of earthly prospects, what are they? Soon clouded, and the fairest form withers, and the firmest health decays, and the most flattering views deceive; but now he is beyond all disappointment, and fears no change. God is his teacher and father; angels and the spirits of the blessed his companions, and heaven his home. What better could he ask? What more could his loving parents and friends desire for him? What more could God bestow?

Such were the views of his most affectionate friends —even of the tender father and mother who loved him perhaps too much. They wished not to call

him back, but hoped so to live that they might meet him in heaven in God's own time. Thus death assumes a most cheerful aspect, disarmed of all its terrors.

Reader, are you a child? See, from this example, that you are not too young to seek and find a Savior. You are not younger than John, not too young to believe in Christ, and repent of your sins, and love God, and pray to him often in your heart, when alone, and when with others. At two years old, his father and mother hoped John loved God. You are older than he, perhaps older than he was when he died. He felt he was a sinner, and lamented it; and are not you a sinner? He repented, and prayed for pardon; and can not you, even though a little child? You are not too young to die. Your prospects are no better than were his, your health no better, parents' desires for your life no greater than were the desires of his. Will you not, then, prepare to live to God, and to die when he may please, and to join the company of children around God's throne? If you will, repent *now*, pray now to be forgiven for Jesus sake, believe on him, and love God now; and while you live, he will keep you, and when you die, he will save you, and take you home to heaven.

Parents, who may read this, are you doing your duty to your children? They are not too young to die. Your example may very early decide their

eternal state. O, think them not too young to come to Jesus, nor too young to learn the way to heaven. Fill their young minds with heavenly truth, and show its happy influence upon yourselves, in your treatment of them, and your daily conduct before them. You may, like the parents of John, be called early to lay their bodies in the grave; but how sweet will be the anticipation of meeting them in heaven, if you have led them to Jesus. In your prayers for them, and your instructions, are you laboring for their immediate conversion, or are you thinking not of this, but laboring that it may take place some years hence? Is not God as able to convert them immediately as he was this child?—as able to do it at the very first dawning of truth on their mind, as when they have sinned for years, and hardened their hearts against the truth? Imitate the Syrophenician woman, in your perseverance in prayer, and faith and effort; and Christ will say to you, "Be it unto thee even as thou wilt."

You may not have your dear little ones many years, but you will have them long enough to do your duty to them. Do it now, do it daily, do it in faith and prayer, and patient persevering effort, and you may expect to secure for them an eternal blessing.

Let not Sabbath School teachers despond, nor relax their efforts. Let them labor for the conversion of their pupils now, and believe God able and will

ing to grant the blessing immediately, and pray for it in faith. Let them cherish every favorable disposition in the dear children of their care, but count nothing accomplished, till the soul is converted, and they see, from Sabbath to Sabbath, each child growing in grace, and in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

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## SABBATH SCHOOL HYMN.

*Composed on the death of John Mooney Mead.*

Loved one, where is now thy rest,
Sweetly on thy Savior's breast?
Dost thou now thy bliss begin,
Freed from sorrow and from sin?

We are toiling here below,
Where the troubled waters flow;
Thou hast reached the blissful sh re,
And will toil and weep no more.

If thy gentle spirit may
For thy young companions pray,
Teach us from thy realms above,
How to prize a Savior's love.

We are destined thee to meet
At our blessed Savior's feet;
Or to dwell in endless wo,
Where the wicked surely go.

Thou indeed, hast gone before;
O, that we may sin no more;
Then, when time with us is past,
We shall find thy heaven at last.

Loved one, O, where is thy rest,
Sweetly on thy Savior's breast?
Thou hast now thy bliss begun,
And a crown of glory won.

# APPENDIX.

*Brief notice of the life of Rev. Asa Mead.*

God calls his ransomed out of the world unto himself, after a longer or shorter pilgrimage, as seems good in his own sight. The reasons of his appointments are not disclosed to us, but they must be infinitely wise and good; and his children cannot depart one hour too soon or too late, either for their own everlasting felicity, or the glory of his name, or the interests of his church below and his kingdom above. On some of these occasions, however, we may notice an impressive concurrence of circumstances, which should sink deep into the hearts of survivors, as a special admonition from his throne, to be also ready. It was to many a solemn lesson, that the writer of this memoir was summoned away in the vigor of life, in less than seven months from the decease of his son, and when the first edition of these sheets was just coming from the press. It is believed that the father, the educator and biographer of such a child, himself a devoted and beloved minister of Jesus Christ, will long be remembered in the churches, and that a brief notice of his life should be here recorded.

The Rev. Asa Mead was born at Meredith, N. H. in 1792; graduated at Dartmouth College in 1818; and received his theological education at the Seminary in Andover. He was licensed in the summer of 1820, and soon after performed a mission in Washington city and Georgetown, for supplying the destitute of those cities with the Bible. He was ordained as pastor of the Congregational church in Brunswick, Me. in December, 1822, and was dismissed at his own request in 1829. While unsettled, he performed an agency for the Temperance Society in various parts of Maine; and another at the South, under the direction of the American Peace Society. August 18, 1830, he was installed over a church in East Hartford, Conn.; where he buried his son, and where, on the 26th of October, 1831, his own life was closed at the age of 39.

The character of Mr. Mead owed much of its vigor and strength, unquestionably, to the circumstances in which the providence of God placed him in early life. At the age of about thirteen he lost his father. The hopes of parental aid in obtaining an education, which he had begun to cherish, were thus blasted; and his whole time and energy were required upon the farm, to assist his widowed mother in providing for several younger children. He fortified his heart and nerved his youthful arm to the arduous task. Two objects were before him night and day; to be a faithful helper to the widow, and

protector to the orphans, and eventually to cultivate his mind for more efficient action on the theatre of life. He often improved the winter moon, hours before day, to prepare wood for the family, that he might secure every hour of instruction at school; a scanty pittance of privilege which he had but a few weeks in the year. This was the manner of his life till about the age of twenty, except that for one or two winters he taught a district school. Then he commenced a course of preparation for college, unaided we believe by the hand of charity; and, through difficulties by which most young men would have been entirely disheartened, prepared himself in less than two years to enter the Sophomore class. He then traveled on foot the distance of fifty miles, entered college an entire stranger to every person there, was admitted, and returned in the same manner. The same energy and perseverance carried him through all his preparatory studies; and this early discipline made him, by the aid of a native vigor of mind, and a good constitution, one of the most persevering and laborious ministers of his time.

At what time his soul was awakened to divine things, and his heart drawn to the Savior and his service, we are not informed. At the time of our first acquaintance with him he appeared to have given himself to that service with all his characteristic ardor; and till all that was mortal in him became useless in death, his purpose never seemed to

waver for an hour, or his heart to fail. Beyond most men we ever knew, he meditated on the things of Christ's kingdom, and gave himself wholly to them. Whatsoever his hand found to do, he *did it*, and with all his might. He was, moreover, a daily witness for the fact, that he who has a mind to work in a good cause, is never at a loss for something to be done. It will appear at the last day that his labor was "not in vain in the Lord." His efforts were diversified, having been put forth in two different and important locations as a pastor, on various extended agencies, and on many public occasions, where the people of God devised and executed plans of usefulness. In every situation and connection he was ready to every good work; and many have risen up here to bless him as the instrument of their conversion to God, whom he will receive as a crown of rejoicing in the great day.

His efficiency in the service of his Lord was not entirely owing to his ardor and perseverance. He did not waste his strength in sudden, disjointed efforts; but secured the results he desired by methodical arrangement. A neighboring minister remarks, "How he met the demands of a populous and scattered congregation, visited so much, inspected the schools so frequently, attended so many minor meetings, prepared for the stated services of the Sabbath, and still dispensed so much labor in other places, it would be difficult to tell, did we not know that he

was a systematic man, as well as frugal of his time. He rose early, and usually wrote his sermons in the morning before breakfast. He almost uniformly wrote one sermon in a week, and did not suspend this habit even when traveling. His preparation for the Sabbath was finished ordinarily on Friday morning, and Saturday was with him a day of relaxation, or of the lighter kind of labor. He thought much of 'redeeming the time.' God had given him a mind of more than common powers of penetration and research; and these he sacredly devoted to the great business of inquiring after and elucidating divine truth. Fearless and independent, duty was his object, irrespective of consequences; and the means by which the kingdom of Christ might be enlarged, the leading theme of his public and private inquiries. His influence was felt. Especially his efforts among the people of his charge in the cause of education, of temperance, of peace, of foreign and domestic missions, of church discipline, and the general interests of religion, will not soon be forgotten."

"Mr. Mead's characteristics," nearly in the words of the same brother, "were independence, fearlessness, zeal in the cause of truth and godliness, patience of research, and decision. He thought for himself," calling no man or sect his master. His inquisitiveness did not lead him away into the wild regions of speculation. No man kept more closely by the oracles of God, interpreted by common sense and the

influence of prayer. His decision was not obstinacy, either on the doctrines of his faith, or the conduct of ministerial and benevolent labors and duties. "His style of preaching was fervid, tender, plain, solemn, and faithful. He sought not for ornament, and aimed at no other eloquence than that of thought and pious sensibility. His purpose was, to direct truth to the consciences of his hearers; and this he did with a boldness and simplicity, a tenderness and ardor, which often interested where they failed to subdue." He accustomed himself to biblical exposition, rather than dry metaphysical discussion; and though his sermons were strictly doctrinal, they were drawn directly from the fountain, and merited for him the appellation of a *biblical preacher*. "He had a testimony in the consciences of his hearers, that he was a *faithful minister*."

Mr. Mead was *a man*, and therefore *a sinner*. *As a Christian* he was not perfect, and carried sinful infirmities to his dying bed. But he was conscious of his errors, and groaned, being burdened with a body of death. Grace, therefore, reigning through Christ, was his refuge and hope; and the help of the Almighty Sanctifier and Comforter brought him off more than conqueror, giving him the victory, through his Redeemer and Intercessor with the Father.

The following extracts from the sermon preached at his funeral will show how this beloved servant of Christ closed his probation and his ministry,

when he was called to give an account of his stewardship.

"During his sickness, which was protracted through several weeks, with many alternations of hope and apprehension, he exhibited the unruffled calmness of a mind that was 'stayed on God.' He was not afraid to die; nor was he without a premonitory expectation that he was drawing near the close of his labors.

"With these expectations he addressed himself with singular calmness to his approaching struggle with the last enemy, and seemed prepared to meet him without dismay. The God of battle was girding him for the conflict; and while his reason was in exercise, no expression escaped him that indicated a reluctance to be gone, or an impatience of suffering. Even during the hours and days of mental aberration, all that he said disclosed a spirit at peace with God, and resting with confidence on the Rock of Ages. Once, when inquired of concerning the state of his mind, he answered with emphasis, 'My trust is in God, *my confidence in him is stronger than ever.*' He said and appeared to think but little about his own evidences; and seemed satisfied in contemplating God as good; frequently repeating, '*Good, good. God is good.*'

"Early in his sickness, he dismissed the world from his mind, only once giving a simple and brief direction about one item of business, and once more

saying to his wife that she would find all his pecuniary affairs intelligibly arranged. He then stedfastly set his face to go up to the mount, at the call of God, and die. A week before his death, he observed—'I have done with earth.' His ardent desire seemed to be, that he might be holy, and possess a maturity for heaven. He prayed much for forgiveness, and to be entirely holy. The Sabbath but one before he died, he seemed to have very solemn conceptions of appearing before God in judgment, mentioned his sins separately, and prayed to be cleansed in the blood of Christ alone. To the inquiry, do you enjoy the sensible presence of the Savior? he answered, 'Not as I wish; sometimes I do, but my unfaithfulness stares me in the face, and at times I doubt my own acceptance.' On what do you rest? 'The promises of God are my only resting place. I can take a firm hold on these promises, and rest on Christ as having done all: though I am guilty, there is my only hope.' Are you willing God's will should be done? He smiled and answered, 'Yes.' Is Christ precious? He answered 'Yes!' In the midst of his paroxysms he was pleading with God for sinners. 'Glory!' he uttered several times: 'Jesus is precious;' and then appeared to be pleading with sinners. 'The wicked will go to hell; the wicked will go to hell,' he repeated frequently. Four days before his death he spent much time in prayer, as if apprehending

his time was short. He commended his children to God, and seemed to be giving all his concerns into God's hands. "Winning souls to Christ," was an expression which he uttered several times in prayer. During the three last days he had very few lucid intervals, and those short; but they were characterized by the same sweet peace and confidence in the Savior, and plainly told that he was ripening for glory. Just before the struggling spirit was released, he was addressed several times in appropriate language from Scripture. Though incapable of speaking, he attended, and seemed for a moment to seize the precious consolation. He was asked, "Are you going home?" He faintly smiled, and bowed his head in token of assent;—and thus he died!"

Mr. Mead's course of labor on earth was short; but he lived to serve his generation, and dying, left blessings behind him. Among others, the world will have no occasion to regret that he was the father of little John; that he lived to train him up so faithfully for Christ and heaven; or that he was spared to give us so lucid an exposition of the principles on which his education was conducted, and of their happy results. How could the father have buried his child in such joyful hope, or have gone peacefully to his own rest, leaving his children behind him in this wicked world, if he had not been *faithful to his infant charge day by day?* Would not

every parent thus send his children before him to the Savior's arms, or leave them safe in the Shepherd's fold at his own decease? Then let him read these memoirs, and learn how to "train them up in the nurture and admonition of the Lord." And surely the providences here narrated admonish him to "do with his might whatsoever his hand findeth to do." It is one of the brightest aspects of the present age, that the hearts of the fathers are turned to the children, and early conversions are multiplied; and no one can better serve his generation, or more effectually prepare the way of the Lord, than by teaching parents how they may secure for their offspring the blessings of the covenant, and make them "a godly seed" in their infant days.

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## MUSINGS AT THE FUNERAL OF MR. MEAD.

There's mourning in this house—else why the pause,
The congregated stillness that pervades
This mass of beings. The eye in sorrow's
Eloquence tells but too well—that judgment
Has come over us in truth—the good man's
Labors cease.

He was accounted faithful.
The churches knew, and lov'd, and gave him praise;
For with untiring apostolic zeal
He water'd and refresh'd them. His sacred
Office was his joy—it seem'd the well-spring
Of his life, and all its sources gushing
Forth in holy fervor, bore him onward,
Fitting him for heaven.

And there his spirit
Dwells—yet may the Christian mourn a "shepherd
Slain." The church, a "Standard bearer fallen."
And the lone widow,—"friend and lover gone:"
Nor is this all—'tis but of recent date,
Even with the odors of the early flowers,
That hand in hand with him she laid her boy,
Her cherished one, beneath the clods,—and the green
Sward of summer has not yet stealthily
Crept over him. O, what a wreck of love
Has death made in thy heart. But there is balm,
For memory can retouch the lines that mark'd
Thy varied path—it has a thousand tongues
To hold companionship—'twill tell of him,
Thy friend and guide; his early course—his strong
Impassion'd love of the sublime—thrown o'er
His native scenes by that creative power
That woo'd his spirit upwards—from "nature
On to nature's God," from earth-born wonders

To mysterious grace—'twill tell of toils,
Privations—scoffs of young associates
To deter him from the all absorbing
Aim—on which his hopes were staid—yet he stood
Firm, and God did give him *conquest.*

'Twas short,
But glorious to himself—among the blest
Full many an one shall bear his *signet,*
And he will marshal them around the throne
Of the Most High—and give in heaven, as still
He did on earth—*to God alone the praise.*
But O the parting hour—how great the change
To thee—the sharer of his pilgrimage—
His best beloved—the same in weal or woe.
Thine earthly house is truly desolate;
The echo of his footsteps comes not near
Thy dwelling—nor through its empty chambers
Comes that voice whose soothings gave thee comfort
In thy *late* hours of grief—but look beyond
The grave—thy *treasures* and thy *hopes* are there
In safety laid upon thy Savior's arm.

C. S.

THE END.

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